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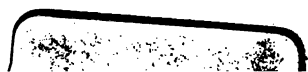
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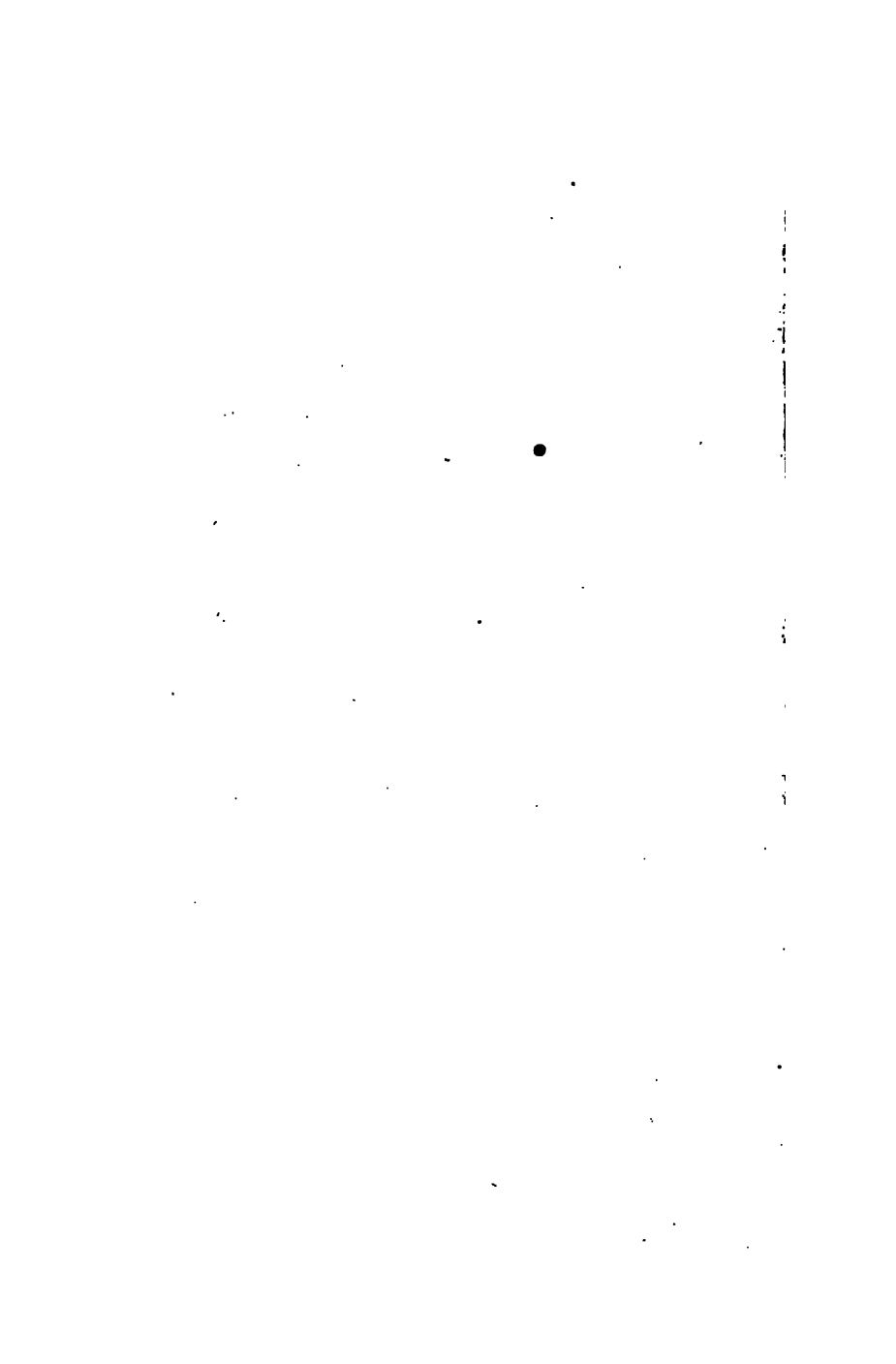


1870-1871  
1872-1873

LEONIDAS.

A

P O E M.



# LEONIDAS.

A

P O E M.

——Θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκη,  
Τί κε τις ἀνώνυμου γῆρας, ἐν σκότῳ  
Καθήμενος, ἔψοι μάταν, ἀπάντων  
Καλῶν ἄμμορος ; PIND. OLYMP. OD. I.

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M.DCC.LXX.



THE

P R E F A C E.

**T**O illustrate the following poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to shew by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought, it would not be improper to prefix the subsequent narration.

**W**HILE Darius, the father of Xerxes,  
was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleo-  
A 3 menes

vi THE PREFACE.

menes and Demaratus were kings in Laedæmon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately expos'd by an uncertain rumour, which render'd his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and trechery of his colleague, who had conceiv'd a personal resentment against him ; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi ; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, nam'd Leutychides, who aspir'd to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declar'd Demaratus not legitimate. Thus by the base practices of his colleague, Cleomenes, and of his kinsman, Leuty-chides, Demaratus was expell'd from  
his

## THE PREFACE.    vii

his regal office in the commonwealth, a Lacedæmonian, distinguish'd in action and counsel, and the only king of Sparta, who by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race had increas'd the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomones Leonidas became king, who rul'd in conjunction with this Leutychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces, which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and



## viii THE PREFACE.

publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world, wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censur'd by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroy'd that merit and authority, which have procur'd to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty a convention, compos'd of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war,

## THE PREFACE. ix

war, who return'd with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroy'd. Leonidas immediately offer'd to sacrifice his life for the preservation of Lacedæmon ; and, marching to Thermopylæ, possess'd himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen ; who with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states, which adjoin'd to Thermopylæ, compos'd an army of near eight thousand men.

XERXES was now advanc'd, as far, as Thessalia ; when hearing, that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedæmonians at their head, and among the rest Leoni-

## x THE PREFACE.

das, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatch'd a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approach'd, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay conceal'd behind a rampart, formerly rais'd by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ on the side of Greece ; so that his whole attention was engag'd by those, who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanc'd to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonish'd the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises ; others were combing their hair ; and all discover'd a total disregard of him, whom they suffer'd to depart, and report to Xerxes, what he had seen : which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Dema-

## THE PREFACE. xi

Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and requir'd him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus inform'd him, that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair, when they were determin'd to fight till the last extremity. Xerxes notwithstanding in the confidence of his power sent ambassadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies; which proposals being receiv'd with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attack'd the Grecians, and were soon repuls'd with great slaughter; fresh troops still succeeded; but with no better fortune, than the first, being oppos'd to an enemy not  
only

## xii THE PREFACE.

only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnish'd with better arms both offensive and defensive.

PLUTARCH in his Laconic apothegms reports, that the Persian king offer'd to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been propos'd by Xerxes after such a series of ill success, as might probably have depress'd the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact, or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduc'd

## THE PREFACE. xiii

duc'd to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ ; till he was extricated from his distress by a Malian, nam'd Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand of the Persian army into Greece through a pass, which lay higher up the country among the mountains of Oeta : whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the seashore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who upon the first sight of the enemy inconsiderately abandon'd their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence ; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and with the utmost expedition march'd to Thermopylæ.

LEONI-

## xiv THE PREFACE.

LEONIDAS no sooner receiv'd information, that the Barbarians had pass'd the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans, and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they follow'd him with reluctance at first, he now compell'd to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus, and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians the most conspicuous next to Leonidas was Dienece, who being told, that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, nam'd  
Alpheus

## THE PREFACE. xv

Alpheus and Maron, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megistias a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honor at Sparta, refus'd to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety ; but sent away his only son, and remain'd himself behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

HERODOTUS relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ ; where, being encompass'd by the Persians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies : but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others affirm, that the Grecians attack'd the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night,  
and



## xvi THE PREFACE.

and in the morning withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus. “ The Grecians, “ having now rejected all thoughts of “ safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously call’d on their general to “ lead them against the Persians, before “ they could be appris’d, that their “ friends had pass’d round the mountains. Leonidas embrac’d the occasion, which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them “ forthwith to dine, as men, who were “ to sup in Elysium. Himself in consequence of this command took a repast, as the means to furnish strength “ for a long continuance, and to give “ perseverance in danger. After a short refresh-

I

## THE PREFACE. xvii

“ refreshment the Grecians were now  
“ prepar’d, and receiv’d orders to assail  
“ the enemies in their camp, to put all,  
“ they met, to the sword, and force a  
“ passage to the royal pavilion ; when,  
“ form’d into one compact body with  
“ Leonidas himself at their head, they  
“ march’d against the Persians, and enter’d  
“ their camp at the dead of night.  
“ The Barbarians, wholly unprepar’d,  
“ and blindly conjecturing, that their  
“ friends were defeated, and themselves  
“ attack’d by the united power of  
“ Greece, hurry together from their  
“ tents with the utmost disorder and  
“ consternation. Many were slain by  
“ Leonidas and his party, but much  
“ greater multitudes by their own  
“ troops, to whom in the midst of this  
“ blind confusion they were not distinguishable  
“ from enemies : for as  
“ night

xviii THE PREFACE.

“ night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue. The want of command, of a watch-word, and of confidence in themselves reduc'd the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroy'd each other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians without difficulty might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion by his death ; but he at the beginning of the tumult betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation ; when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those, who were left behind : then, while night lasted, they rang'd through the whole camp in diligent search of the tyrant. When  
morn-

## THE PREFACE. xix

“ morning appear’d, the Persians, per-  
“ ceiving the true state of things, held  
“ the inconsiderable number of their  
“ enemies in contempt; yet were so ter-  
“ rified at their valour, that they avoid-  
“ ed a near engagement; but inclosing  
“ the Grecians on every side, shower’d  
“ their darts and arrows upon them at  
“ a distance, and in the end destroy’d  
“ their whole body. In this manner  
“ fell the Grecians, who under the con-  
“ duct of Leonidas defended the pass  
“ of Thermopylæ. All must admire  
“ the virtue of these men, who with  
“ one consent, maintaining the post  
“ allotted by their country, cheerfully  
“ renounced their lives for the com-  
“ mon safety of Greece, and esteem’d  
“ a glorious death more eligible, than  
“ to live with dishonor. Nor is the  
“ consternation of the Persians incre-  
“ dible.

xx THE PREFACE.

“ dible. Who among those Barbarians  
“ could have conjectur’d such an event ?  
“ Who could have expected, that five  
“ hundred men would have dar’d to  
“ attack a million ? Wherefore shall  
“ not all posterity reflect on the virtue  
“ of these men, as the object of imi-  
“ tation, who, though the loss of their  
“ lives was the necessary consequence of  
“ their undertaking, were yet uncon-  
“ quer’d in their spirit ; and among all  
“ the great names, deliver’d down to  
“ remembrance, are the only heroes,  
“ who obtain’d more glory in their fall,  
“ than others from the brightest victo-  
“ ries ? With justice may they be  
“ deem’d the preservers of the Grecian  
“ liberty, even preferably to those, who  
“ were conquerors in the battles, fought  
“ afterwards with Xerxes ; for the me-  
“ mory of that valour, exerted in the  
“ defence

## THE PREFACE. xxi

“ defence of Thermopylæ, for ever de-  
“ jected the Barbarians, while the Greeks  
“ were fir’d with emulation to equal  
“ such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon  
“ the whole, there never were any be-  
“ fore these, who attain’d to immorta-  
“ lity through the meer excess of vir-  
“ tue ; whence the praise of their for-  
“ titude hath not been recorded by  
“ historians only, but hath been cele-  
“ brated by numbers of poets, among  
“ others by Simonides the lyric.”

PAUSANIAS in his Laconics consi-  
ders the defence of Thermopylæ by Le-  
onidas, as an action superior to any  
achiev’d by his cotemporaries, and to  
all the exploits of preceding ages. “ Ne-  
“ ver (says he) had Xerxes beheld  
“ Greece, and laid in ashes the city  
“ of Athens, had not his forces under  
“ Hydar-

## xxii THE PREFACE.

“ Hydarnes been conducted through a  
“ path over mount Oeta ; and, by that  
“ means encompassing the Greeks,  
“ overcome and slain Leonidas.” Nor  
is it improbable, that such a commander at the head of such troops should have maintain’d his post in so narrow a pass, till the whole army of Xerxes had perish’d by famine. At the same time his navy had been miserably shatter’d by a storm, and worsted in an engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave companions, so meritorious to their country, and so glorious to themselves, hath obtain’d such a high degree of veneration and applause from pass’d ages, that few among the ancient compilers of history have been silent on this amazing instance of magnanimity, and  
zeal

## THE PREFACE. xxiii

zeal for liberty ; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some on the whole body, others on particulars, who died at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in every nation conversant with learning, and at this distance of time still rendering their virtue the object of admiration and of praise.

I SHALL now detain the reader no longer, than to take this public occasion of expressing my sincere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and the sense of my obligations for the early honor of his friendship ; to him I inscribe the following poem ; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his Lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguish'd by his disinterested zeal, and unshaken fidelity.



## **xxiv THE PREFACE.**

fidelity to his country, not less in civil life, than in the field : to him therefore a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory, and love of liberty, is due from the nature of the subject.

**R. GLOVER.**

**LEONIDAS.**

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK the FIRST.

### The Argument.

*Xerxes, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and pass'd over the Hellespont into Thrace with a design to conquer Greece; the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprised of his march into Thrace, than they determin'd without further delay to dispute his passage at the streights of Thermopylae, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leutychides, one of their two kings, counsels the*

VOL. I. B people

*people to advance no farther, than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hundred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany and die with him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus. Leonidas after an interview with his queen departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is join'd by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus, those, who are already possess'd of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother Polydorus in Persia.*

**T**HE virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life  
 To save his country at th'Oetæan streights,  
 Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east  
 In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,

**Book I.    L E O N I D A S.**

**3**

O Muse, record. The Hellespont they pass'd,    5  
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift  
To Corinth flew. Her Isthmus was the seat  
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns  
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full  
He finds the Spartan people with their kings;    10  
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,  
From Hercules descended. They the sons  
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd to learn  
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods,  
That morn expected from the Delphian dome.    15  
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,  
And thus address'd them. For immediate war,  
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents  
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.  
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard    20  
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.

HERE Alpheus paus'd, Leutychides, who shar'd  
 With great Leonidas the sway, uprose  
 And spake. Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.  
 Why from her bosom should Laconia send      25  
 Her valiant race to wage a distant war  
 Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd  
 Our native barrier. In this favor'd land,  
 Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood  
 That Isthmus inaccessible secures.      30  
 There let our standards rest. Your solid strength  
 If once you scatter in defence of states  
 Remote and feeble, you betray your own,  
 And merit Jove's derision. With assent  
 The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd.      35

O MOST ungen'rous counsel! Most unwise!  
 Shall we, confining to that Isthmian fence  
 Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry state

Dis-

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.      5

Disown'd, expos'd ? Shall Athens, while her fleets  
Unceasing watch th' innumerable foes,      40  
And trust th' impending dangers of the field  
To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear,  
That to Barbarian violence we leave  
Her unprotected walls ? Her hoary fires,  
Her helpless matrons, and their infant race      45  
To servitude and shame ? Her guardian gods  
Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main  
With Pallas, pow'r of wisdom, at their helms  
Will soon transport them to a happier clime,  
Safe from insulting foes, from false allies,      50  
And eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.  
Then shall we feel the unresisted force  
Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains  
With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,  
By us betray'd to bondage, will support      55  
A Persian lord, and lift th' avenging spear

For our destruction. But, my friends, reject  
Such mean, such dang'rous counsels, which would  
blat

Your long-establiſh'd honors, and aſſiſt  
The proud invader. O eternal king 60  
Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds !  
Each low and partial paſſion thence expel !  
Greece is our gen'ral mother. All muſt join  
In her defence, or ſep'rate each muſt fall.

THIS said, authority and shame controll'd 65  
The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd.  
He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,  
Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,  
The Pythian maid unfolded heav'n's decrees.  
He came ; but discontent and grief o'ercast 70  
His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,  
Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread  
Each

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.

7

Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry visage hung  
 Sad expectation. Not a whisper told  
 The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd,      75  
 All still, as death, to hear the solemn tale.  
 As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm  
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,  
 Soft-breathing, lightly with its wings along  
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear      80  
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse ;  
 None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,  
 Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main :  
 So through the wide and lifting croud no sound,  
 No voice, but thine, O Agis, broke the air ;      85  
 While thus the issue of thy awful charge  
 Thy lips deliver'd. Spartans, in your name  
 I went to Delphi. I enquir'd the doom  
 Of Lacedæmon from th' impending war,  
 When in these words the deity reply'd.      90



"INHABITANTS of Sparta, Persia's arms  
 Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust ;  
 Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,  
 Cause Lacedæmon for his death to mourn."

As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd 95  
 The snakes of dire Medusa, all, who view'd  
 The Gorgon features, were congeal'd to stone,  
 With ghastly eyeballs, on the hero bent,  
 And horror, living in their marble form ;  
 Thus with amazement rooted, where they stood, 100  
 In speechless terror frozen, on their kings  
 The Spartans gaz'd : but soon their anxious looks  
 All on the great Leonidas unite,  
 Long known his country's refuge. He alone  
 Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays 105  
 His god-like presence. Dignity and grace  
 Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins

With

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.      9

With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine  
Sublimest virtue, and desire of fame,  
Where justice gives the laurel, in his eye      110  
The inextinguishable spark, which fires  
The souls of patriots ; while his brow supports  
Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.  
Serene he cast his looks around, and spake.

WHY this astonishment on ev'ry face,      115  
Ye men of Sparta ? Does the name of death  
Create this fear and wonder ? O my friends,  
Why do we labour through the arduous paths,  
Which lead to virtue ? Fruitless were the toil,  
Above the reach of human feet were plac'd      120  
The distant summit ; if the fear of death  
Could intercept our passage. But a frown  
Of unavailing terror he assumes  
To shake the firmness of a mind, which knows,  
B 5      That,

That, wanting virtue, life is pain and woe, 125  
That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,  
And looks around for happiness in vain.  
Then speak, O Sparta, and demand my life.  
My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,  
And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame 130  
The gods allow to many ; but to die  
With equal lustre is a blessing, Jove  
Among the choicest of his boons reserves,  
Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.

SALVATION thus to Sparta he proclaim'd. 135  
Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,  
Suspending praise ; nor praise at last refounds  
In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n :  
A reverential murmur breathes applause.  
So were the pupils of Lycurgus train'd 140  
To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb

Before

Book I.    L E O N I D A S.

11

Before their senate, Ephori and kings,  
Nor exultation into clàmour broke.  
Amidst them rose Dieneces, and thus.

HASTE to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes shew 145  
The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd  
In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,  
Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger bend.  
Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands  
To slavery and rapine. They will shrink 150  
Before your standard, and their native seats  
Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye fires,  
Who with a growing race have blest'd the state.  
That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece forbid  
Delay. Heav'n summons. Equal to the cause 155  
A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more ?

BOLD

BOLD Alpheus next. Command my swift return  
 Amid the Isthmian council to declare  
 Your instant march. His dictates all approve.  
 Back to the Isthmus he unwearied speeds. 160

Now from th' assembly with majestic steps  
 Forth moves their god-like king, with conscious  
 worth  
 His gen'rous bosom glowing. Such the port  
 Of his divine progenitor; impell'd  
 By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod 165  
 Invincible to face in horrid war  
 The triple form of Geryon, or against  
 The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.

SAY, Muse, what heroes, by example fir'd,  
 Nor less by honor, offer'd now to bleed? 170  
 Dienece the foremost, brave and staid,

Of vet'ran skill to range in martial fields  
Well-order'd lines of battle. Maron next,  
Twin-born with Alpheus, shews his manly frame.  
Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen      175  
Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war  
His try'd companion. Graceful were his steps,  
And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul  
Preserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd  
By arts unknown to Lacedaemon's race.      180  
High was his office. He, when Sparta's want  
Support and counsel from the gods requir'd,  
Was sent the halbow'd messenger to learn  
Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,  
From rocky Delphi, from Dodone's shade,      185  
Or sea-encircled Dalos, on the cell  
Of dark Trophonius, round Bosotia known.  
Three hundred more complete th' intrepid band,  
Illustrious fathers all of gen'rous sons,

The

The future guardians of Laconia's state. 190  
Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son,  
Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood  
Were they. Megistias, heav'n-enlighten'd seer,  
Had left his native, Acarnanian shore;  
Along the border of Eurotas chose 195  
His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,  
And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath  
Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,  
Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm  
From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught 200  
To wield the sword, and poise the weighty spear.

BUT to his home Leonidas retir'd.

There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd  
His mighty soul, while nature in his breast  
A short emotion rais'd. What sudden grief, 205  
What cold reluctance now unmans my heart,

And

And whispers, that I fear ? Can death dismay  
Leonidas ; death, often seen and scorn'd,  
When clad most dreadful in the battle's front ?  
Or to relinquish life in all its pride,      210  
With all my honors, blooming round my head,  
Repines my soul, or rather to forsake,  
Eternally forsake my weeping wife,  
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends ?  
Leonidas, awake. Shall these withstand      215  
The public safety ? Hark, thy country calls.  
O sacred voice, I hear thee. At the sound  
Reviving virtue brightens in my heart ;  
Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive  
My unreluctant hand. Immortal fame,      220  
Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,  
With wings unwearied wilt protect my tomb.



HIS virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd,  
When Agis enter'd. If my tardy lips,  
He thus began, have hitherto forborne 225  
To bring their grateful tribute of applause,  
Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,  
Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief  
Detain'd me from thee. O unquell'd man,  
Though Lacedæmon call thy prime regard, 230  
Forget not her, sole victim of distress  
Amid the gen'ral safety. To assuage  
Such pain fraternal tenderness is weak.

THE king embrac'd him, and reply'd. O best,  
O dearest man, conceive not, but my soul 235  
To her is fondly bound, from whom my days  
Their largest share of happiness deriv'd.  
Can I, who yield my breath, lest others mourn,  
Lest thousands should be wretched, when she pines,  
More

More lov'd, than any, tho' less dear, than all, 240  
Can I neglect her griefs ? In future days,  
If thou with grateful memory record  
My name and fate, O Sparta, pass not this  
Unheeded by. The life, for thee resign'd,  
Know not a painful hour to tire my soul,      245  
Nor were they common joys, I left behind.

He spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd  
In tend'rest passion. Then in eager haste  
The faithful partner of his bed he sought.  
Amid her weeping children sat the queen      250  
Immovable and mute. Her swimming eyes  
Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er  
Her lab'ring bosom, blotted with her tears.  
As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,  
The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads 255  
The radiant vesture of her silver light

O'er

O'er the dull face of nature ; so the queen,  
Divinely graceful shining through her grief,  
Brighten'd the cloud of woe. Her lord approach'd.  
Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice 260  
Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time  
Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head,  
She gives this utterance to her tender thoughts.

O THOU, whose presence is my sole delight ;  
If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words 265  
Can check the rapid current of distress,  
How am I mark'd for misery ! How long !  
When of life's journey less, than half, is pass'd,  
And I must hear those calming sounds no more,  
Nor see that face, which makes affliction smile. 270

THIS said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.  
Her orphan children, her devoted lord,

Pale,

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.      19

Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,  
Her ever-during solitude of woe,  
All rise in mingled horror to her sight,      275  
When thus in bitt'rest agony she spake.

O WHITHER art thou going from my arms !  
Shall I no more behold thee ! Oh ! no more,  
In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,  
Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil,      280  
And find thy dwelling joyful ! Ah ! too brave,  
Why wouldst thou hurry to the dreery gates  
Of death, uncall'd---- Another might have bled,  
Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,  
Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure.      285  
Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears.  
All with these babes lament a father lost.  
Alas ! how heavy is our lot of pain !  
Our sighs must last, when ev'ry other breast  
Exults,

Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss. 290  
Thou didst not heed our anguish---didst not seek  
One pause for my instruction how to bear  
Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.

UNUTTERABLE sorrow here confin'd  
Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd. 295

I SEE, I share thy agony. My soul  
Ne'er knew, how warm the prevalence of love,  
How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour ;  
Ner was she once insensible to thee  
In all her fervour to assert my fame. 300  
How had the honour of my name been stain'd  
By hesitation ? Shameful life preferr'd  
By an inglorious colleague would have left  
No choice, but what were infamy to shun,  
Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more, 305  
That

that of thy love regardless, or thy tears,  
 rush, uncall'd, to death. The voice of fate,  
 the gods, my fame, my country press my doom.  
 Ah! thou dear mourner! Wherefore swells afresh  
 that tide of woe? Leonidas must fall.      310

alas! far heavier misery impends  
 'er thee and these, if, soften'd by thy tears,  
 shamefully refuse to yield that breath,  
 which justice, glory, liberty and heav'n  
 claim for my country, for my sons and thee. 315  
 Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect  
 on my paternal fondness. Hath my heart  
 ever known a pause in love, or pious care?  
 How shall that care, that tenderness be shewn  
 most warm, most faithful. When thy husband  
 dies      320

for Lacedæmon's safety, thou wilt share,  
 Thou and thy children the diffusive good.

I am

I am selected by th' immortal gods  
 To save a people. Should my timid heart  
 That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge 325  
 Thee too in shame, in sorrow. Thou wouldst mourn  
 With Lacedæmon ; wouldst with her sustain  
 Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.  
 Behold thy sons now worthy of their name,  
 Their Spartan birth. Their growing bloom would  
 pine 330

Depress'd, dishonor'd, and their youthful hearts  
 Beat at the sound of liberty no more.  
 On their own merit, on their father's fame,  
 When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,  
 Before the world illustrious will they rise 335  
 Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.

HERE paus'd the patriot. In religious awe  
 Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint

The solemn silence broke.    Tears ceas'd to flow ;  
Ceas'd for a moment soon again to stream.    340

Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,  
His brave companions of the war demand  
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs renew'd,  
Surpassing utterance, intercept her sighs.

Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue.    345

In speechless anguish on the hero's breast

She sinks.    On ev'ry side his children press,  
Hang on his knees, and kiss his honor'd hand.

His soul no longer struggles to confine  
Her agitation.    Down the hero's cheek,    350

Down flows the manly sorrow.    Great in woe

Amid his children, who inclose him round,

He stands, indulging tenderness and love

In graceful tears, when thus with lifted eyes,

Address'd to heav'n. Thou ever-living pow'r, 355

Look down propitious, sire of gods and men !



O to this faithful woman, whose desert  
May claim thy favor, grant the hours of peace !  
And thou, my bright forefather, seed of Jove,  
O Hercules, neglect not these thy race ! 360  
But since that spirit, I from thee derive,  
Transports me from them to resistless fate,  
Be thou their guardian ! Teach them like thyself  
By glorious labours to embellish life,  
And from their father let them learn to die. 365

HERE ending, forth he issues, and assumes  
Before the ranks his station of command.  
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n  
On Phlegra's plains to meet the giant sons  
Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd 370  
The deities embattled ; while their king  
Tow'r'd in the front with thunder in his grasp.  
Thus through the streets of Lacedæmon pass'd  
Leonidas.

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.      25

Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow  
The multitude exulting. On he treads      375  
Rever'd. Unfated, their enraptur'd fight  
Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues  
Extol and hail him, as their guardian god.  
Firm in his nervous hand he gripes the spear.  
Low, as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs 380  
The massy shield ; and o'er his burnish'd helm  
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,  
Around whose brows entwining laurels play,  
In lofty-sounding strains his praise record ;  
While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way      385  
Bestrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breast  
Is all possess'd by glory, which dispell'd  
Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret  
For those, he left behind. The rev'rend train  
Of Lacedæmon's senate last appear      390  
To take their final, solemn leave, and grace

VOL. I.      C      Their

Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow  
In civil pomp their venerable robes,  
Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop  
Of warriors press behind him, Maron here 395  
With Menalippus warm in flow'ry prime,  
There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief,  
Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend  
The loftiest mansions ; thronging o'er the roofs,  
Applaud their sons, their husbands, as they  
march : 400

So parted Argo from th' Iolchian Strand  
To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,  
Rang'd on the cliffs, o'er shading Neptune's face,  
Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes  
Admiring, still in pæans blest'd the helm, 405  
By Greece entrusted with her chosen sons  
For high adventures on the Colchian shore.

SWIFT

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.      27

SWIFT on his course Leonidas proceeds.  
Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,  
Where his victorious ancestor subdu'd      410  
The many-headed Hydra, and the lake  
To endless fame consign'd. Th' unweary'd bands  
Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,  
And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.  
Six days incessant was their march pursu'd,      415  
When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves  
Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.  
Below the wide horizon then the sun  
Had dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night  
Gleam'd from the center of th' ethereal vault,      420  
And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed  
Her placid light. Leonidas detains  
Dieneces and Agis. Open stands  
The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.  
As here they sit conversing, from the hill,      425

Which rose before them, one of noble port  
Is seen descending. Lightly down the slope  
He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew  
The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd.

O THOU, with swiftnefs by the gods endu'd 430  
To match the ardour of thy daring soul,  
What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks  
Neglect to arm and face the public foe?

Good news give wings, said Alpheus. Greece  
is arm'd.

The neighb'ring Isthmus holds th' Arcadian  
bands. 435

From Mantinea Diophantus leads  
Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls  
With Hegesander move. A thousand more,  
Who in Orchomenus reside, and range

## Of

Of public safety. Others are immers'd  
In all the sloth of plenty, who, unmov'd  
In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd.  
Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field. 460  
The wily Anaxander is their chief  
With Leontiades. To see their march  
I staid, then hasten'd to survey the streights,  
Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.

FOREVER mingled with a crumbling soil, 465  
Which moulders round th' indented Malian coast,  
The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,  
Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,  
Thermopylæ is stretch'd. Where broadest spread,  
It measures threescore paces, bounded here 470  
By the salt ooze, which underneath presents  
A dreery surface; there the lofty cliffs  
Of woody'd Cæta overlook the pass,

And

And far beyond o'er half the surge below  
 Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth 475  
 An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,  
 A wall with gates and tow'rs. The Locrian force  
 Was marching forward. Them I pass'd to greet  
 Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch'd  
 Seven hundred spears before th' important fence. 480  
 His brother's son attends the rev'rend chief,  
 Young Dithyrambus. He for noble deeds,  
 Yet more for temperance of mind renown'd,  
 In early bloom with brightest honors shines,  
 Nor wantons in the blaze. Here Agis spake. 485

WELL hast thou painted that illustrious youth.  
 He is my host at Thespia. Though adorn'd  
 With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bless'd,  
 His gentle virtues take from Envy's lips  
 Their blasting venom ; and her baneful eye 490



Strives on his worth to smile. In silence all  
Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds.

PLATÆA's chosen veterans I saw,  
Small in their number, matchless in their fame.  
Diomedon the leader. Keen his sword        495  
At Marathon was felt, where Asia bled.  
These guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,  
Unknown to strangers winds an upper freight,  
Which by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.

ERE these brave Greeks I quitted; in the bay 500  
A stately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet  
Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praise  
He utter'd rapture, but austere ly blam'd  
Laconia's tardy counsels; while the ships  
Of Athens long had stemm'd Eubœan tides, 505  
Which flow not distant from our future post.

This

Book I.      L E O N I D A S.      33

This was the far-fam'd Æschylus, by Mars,  
By Phœbus lov'd. Parnassus him proclaims  
The first of attic poets, him the plains      „  
Of Marathon a soldier, try'd in arms.      510

WELL may Athenians murmur, said the king.  
Too long hath Sparta slumber'd on her shield.  
By morn beyond the Isthmus we will spread  
A gen'rous banner. In Laconian strains  
Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame      515  
Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attract  
The brighter muse of Athens in the song  
Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.  
Share in our fate ; or, hast'ning home, report,  
How much already thy discerning mind,      520  
Thy active limbs have merited from me,  
How serv'd thy country. From th' impatient lips  
Of Alpheus swift these fervid accents broke.

I HAVE not measur'd such a tract of land,  
Have not, untir'd, beheld the setting sun, 525  
Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps  
To animate the Grecians, that myself  
Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.  
Return ? Ah ! no. A second time my speed  
Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs 530  
Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain  
An honorable grave. And oh ! amid  
His country's perils if a Spartan breast  
May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge  
I seek not only for th' insulted state, 535  
But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,  
Than I, and Maron, blest'd our father's years,  
Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.  
His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime,  
Was bent to strenuous virtue, Gen'rous scorn 540  
Of pain, or danger taught his early strength  
To

To struggle patient with severest toils.

Of, when inclement winter chill'd the air,

When frozen show'rs had swoln Eurotas' stream,

Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge 545

To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,

As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,

A savage corsair of the Persian king

My brother naked and defenceless bore,

Ev'n in my sight, to Asia; there to waste 550

With all the promise of its growing worth

His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,

Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,

The days, he wept, the sleepless nights, he beat

His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear 555

Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,

O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs

In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe.

HERE

HERE interpos'd Dienece. Their hands  
He grasp'd, and cordial transport thus express'd. 560

O THAT Lycurgus from the shades might rise  
To praise the virtue, which his laws inspire !

THUS till the dead of night these heroes pass'd  
The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd  
Each other's virtue. Happiest of men ! 565  
At length with gentle heaviness the pow'r  
Of sleep invades their eyelids, and constrains  
Their magnanimity and zeal to rest :  
When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon  
Immers'd in midnight shade her silver head. 570

END of the FIRST BOOK.

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK the SECOND.

### The Argument.

*Leonidas on his approach to the Isthmus is met by the leaders of the troops, sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies, who compos'd the Isthmian council. He harangues them ; then proceeds in conjunction with these forces towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is join'd by Dithyrambus ; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertain'd by Oileus, the public host, of the Lacedæmonian state ; and the next morning is accompany'd by him in a car to the temple of Pan : he finds Medon there, the son of Oileus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is inform'd, that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.*

AURORA

**A**URORA spreads her purple beams around,  
 When move the Spartans. Their ap-  
 proach is known.

The Isthmian council, and the different chiefs,  
 Who lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet  
 Leonidas ; Eupalamus the strong, 5  
 Alcmaeon, Clonius, Diophantus brave  
 With Hegesander. At their head is seen  
 Aristobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks  
 Obey, Mycenæ once august in pow'r,  
 In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name 10  
 Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king  
 The chieftain spake. Leonidas, survey  
 Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek  
 Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,  
 Believe not, we can fear, deriv'd from those, 15  
 Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge  
 The strength of Greece ; who desert left the fields  
 Of

Book II. LEONIDAS.

39

Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls  
From their foundations levell'd to the ground.

LEONIDAS replies not, but his voice 20

Directs to all. Illustrious warriors, hail !

Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,

Your gen'rous ardour in the common cause.

But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state,

O venerable synod, who consign 25

To our protecting sword, the gate of Greece,

Thrice hail ! Whate'er by valour we obtain,

Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes

Contemplate ev'ry city, and discern

Their various tempers. Some with partial care 30

To guard their own neglect the public weal.

Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,

Corruption there presides. O fire the brave

To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cause.

Confirm



Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold, 35  
The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray  
Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,  
Or call them back to honor. Let us all  
Be link'd in sacred union, and this land  
May face the world's whole multitude in arms. 40  
If for the spoil, by Paris borne to Troy,  
A thousand keels the Hellespont o'erspread ;  
Shall not again confederated Greece  
Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give  
What once she gave to fame ? Behold, we haste 45  
To stop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,  
He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.  
But as the gods conceal, how long our strength  
May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield ;  
Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece 50  
Range all her free-born numbers in the field.

LEONIDAS

LEONIDAS concluded. Awful stepp'd  
Before the sage assembly one supream  
And old in office, who address'd the king.

THY bright example ev'ry heart unites. 55  
From thee her happiest omens Greece derives  
Of concord, safety, liberty and fame.  
Go then, O first of mortals, go, impress  
Amaze and terror on the barb'rous host ;  
The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem 60  
Less dear, than honor, and their country's cause.

THIS heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,  
Exulting, tasted of the sweet reward  
Due to thy name through endless time. Once more  
His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought 65  
His native land, which he alone can save ;  
Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er

The

The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind  
In deep arrangement. So th' imperial Ship  
With stately bulk along the heaving tide 70  
In military pomp conducts the pow'r  
Of some proud navy, bounding from the port  
To bear the vengeance of a mighty state  
Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon  
They march ; when halting, as they take repast, 75  
Across the plain before them they descry  
A troop of Thespians. One above the rest  
In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,  
Whose gold-emblazon'd orb collects the beams,  
Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne, 80  
Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,  
With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,  
Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view  
Beneath the radiant honors of his crest  
A countenance of youth in rosy prime, 85  
And

And manly sweetness won the fix'd regard  
Of each beholder. With a modest grace  
He came respectful tow'rd the king, and shew'd,  
That all ideas of his own desert  
Were sunk in veneration. So the god 90  
Of light salutes his empyreal fire ;  
When from his altar in th' embow'ring grove  
Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound  
Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears  
In hymns his praises from the sons of men, 95  
He reascends the high, Olympian seats :  
Such reverential homage on his brow,  
O'er shading, softens his effulgent bloom  
With loveliness and grace. The king receives  
Th' illustrious Thespian thus. My willing  
tongue 100  
Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear  
All in thy aspect to become that name,  
Re-

Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal  
Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul  
Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend. 105

To him the youth. O bulwark of our weal,  
My name is Dithyrambus ; which the lips  
Of some benevolent, some gen'rous friend  
To thee have founded in a partial strain,  
And thou hast heard with favor. In thy fight 110  
I stand, deputed by the Thespian chief,  
The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,  
Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.  
Three days will bring the hostile pow'rs in view.

He said. The ready standards are uprear'd. 115  
By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning shadows fall,  
The march continues, then by day-spring sweeps  
The earliest dews. The van, by Agis led,  
Dis-

Displays the grisly face of battle rough  
With spears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length 120  
Along th' indented way. Beside him march'd  
His gallant, Thespian host. The center boasts  
Leonidas the leader, who retains  
The good Megistias near him. In the rear  
Dieneces commanded, who in charge 125  
Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,  
For these instructions. Let thine eye, young man,  
Dwell on the order of our varying march ;  
As champain, vally, mountain, or defile  
Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus 130  
Conducts not his Barbarians like the sands  
In number. Yet the discipline of Greece  
They will encounter feeble, as the sands,  
Dash'd on a rock, and scatter'd in their fall.

To him th' enquiring youth. The martial  
 tread, 135  
 The flute's slow warble, both in just accord,  
 Entrance my senses ; but let wonder ask,  
 Why is that tender vehicle of sound  
 Preferr'd in war by Sparta ? Other Greeks  
 To more sonorous music rush in fight. 140

SON of my friend, Dieneces rejoins,  
 Well dost thou note I praise thee. Sparta's law  
 With human passions, source of human woes,  
 Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs  
 Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat 145  
 To principle and order. Music too,  
 By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law ;  
 Still to her plan subservient melts in notes,  
 Which cool and sooth, not irritate and warm.  
 Thus by habitual abstinence, apply'd 150

Book II. LEONIDAS.

47

To ev'ry sense, suppressing nature's fire,  
By modes of duty, not by ardour sway'd;  
O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,  
At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.

O MIGHT I merit a Laconian name ! 155

The Acarnanian answer'd. But explain,  
What is the land, we traverse ? What the hill,  
Whose parted summit in a spacious void  
Admits a bed of clouds ? And gracious tell,  
Whose are those suits of armour, which I see 160  
Borne by two Helots. At the questions pleas'd,  
Dieneces continues. Those belong  
To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot  
They, disencumber'd, all at large precede  
This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of  
slaves, 165  
Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,  
Provide,



Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.

This tract is Phocis. That divided hill

Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine

Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death 170

The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood

A crop will spring of victory to Greece.

AND these three hundred high in birth and rank,

All citizens of Sparta . . . . cries the youth,

They all must bleed, Dieneces subjoins, 175

All with their leader. So the law decrees.

To him with earnest looks the gen'rous youth.

Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour

Clofe to thy buckler ? Gratitude will brace

Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force 180

Of thy instruction. Menalippus, no,

Return'd the chief. Not thou of Spartan breed,

Nor

Nor call'd to perish. Thou unwedded too  
Wouldst leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,  
Live to enjoy our salutary fall. 185

Reply is needless. See, the fun descends.  
The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,  
Son of Megistias. In my name command  
Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp.

We pitch our tents in Locris. Quick the youth 190  
His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,  
Where at the call of Alpheus Locris show'r'd  
Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,  
The fated warriors soon in slumber lose  
The memory of toil. His watchful round 195  
Dieneces with Menalippus takes.

THE moon rode high and clear. Her light benign  
To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling shew'd,  
All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side

Was fenc'd by trees high-shadowing. The front 200  
Look'd on a crystal pool, by feather'd tribes  
At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the springs  
A small redundance fed a shallow brook,  
O'er smoothest pebbles rippling just to wake,  
Not startle silence, and the ear of night 205  
Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around,  
The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep,  
Whose drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

THE warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat  
Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain 210  
Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.  
Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog  
Is rous'd. All heedful of the wonted sound  
Their known conductor follow. Slow behind  
Th' observing warriors move, Ere long they  
reach 215

A broad and verdant circle, thick inclos'd  
 With birches straight and tall, whose glossy rind  
 Is clad in silver from Diana's car.

The ground was holy, and the central spot  
 An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb 220  
 Of skreening trees th' external circuit swarm'd  
 With sheep and beeves, each neighb'ring hamlet's  
 wealth

Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,  
 Whom, by the name of Melibœus hail'd,  
 A peasant throng furrounded. As their chief, 225  
 He nigh the altar to his rural friends  
 Addres'd these words. O sent from different  
 lords

With contribution to the public wants,  
 Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!  
 Speed to the slow-pac'd ox, for once impart! 230  
 That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,

We to our summons true, ere noon-tide blaze,  
May join Oileus, and his praise obtain.

HE ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,  
Combin'd with bleating notes, and tinkling bells, 235  
With clamor shrill from busy tongues of dogs,  
Or hollow-founding from the deep-mouth'd ox,  
Along the valley herd and flock are driv'n  
Succesive, halting oft to harmless spoil  
Of flow'rs and herbage, springing in their fight. 240  
While Melibœus marshall'd with address  
The inoffensive host, unseen in shades  
Dieneces applauded, and the youth  
Of Menalippus caution'd. Let no word  
Impede the careful peasant. On his charge 245  
Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid  
He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see  
That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands

Our

Our debt to nature. On a carpet dry  
Of moss beneath a wholesome beech they lay, 250  
Arm'd, as they were. Their slumber short retires  
With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,  
The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth  
In Menalippus caught the morning rays  
To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide 255  
Of cultivated hillocks, dales and lawns,  
Where mansions, hamlets interpos'd ; where domes  
Rose to their gods through consecrated shades.  
He then exclaims. O say, can Jove devote  
These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames ? 260

THE Spartan answers. Ravage, sword and fire  
Must be endur'd, as incidental ills.  
Suffice it, these invaders soon, or late,  
Will leave this soil more fertile by their blood  
With spoils abundant to rebuild the fanes. 265

Precarious benefits are these, thou seest,  
So fram'd by heav'n ; but virtue is a good,  
No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.

BESIDE the public way an oval fount  
Of marble sparkled with a silver spray 270  
Of falling rills, collected from above.  
The army halted, and their hollow casques  
Dipp'd in the limpid stream. Behind it rose  
An edifice, compos'd of native roots,  
And oaken trunks of knotted girth unwrought. 275  
Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd arms  
Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.  
These words, engraven on a tablet rude,  
Megistias reads, the rest in silence hear.  
“ Yon marble fountain, by Oileus plac'd, 280  
“ To thirsty lips in living water flows ;  
“ For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat ;  
“ A

" A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,  
" His dinted shield, his helmet he resign'd.  
" O paffenger, if born to noble deeds 285  
" Thou wouldst obtain perpetual grace from Jove,  
" Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,  
" And thy decline to hospitable cares.  
" Rest here ; then seek Oileus in his vale."

O Jove, burst forth Leonidas, thy grace 290  
Is large and various. Length of days and bliss  
To him thou giv'st, to me a shorten'd term,  
Nor yet less happy. Grateful we confess  
Thy diff'rent bounties, measur'd full to both.  
Come let us seek Oileus in his vale. 295

THE word is giv'n. The heavy phalanx moves.  
The light-pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,  
Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook



Blithe Melibœus in a spacious vale,  
The fruitfullest in Locris, ere the sun 300  
Shot forth his noon-tide beams. On either side  
A surface scarce perceptibly ascends,  
Luxuriant vegetation crouds the soil  
With trees close-rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads  
Of native fruitage to the sight reveal 305  
Their vig'rous nurture. There the flushing peach,  
The apple, citron, almond, pear and date,  
Pomegranates, purple mulberry, and fig  
From interlacing branches mix their hues  
And scents, the passenger's delight; but leave 310  
In the mid-vale a pasture long and large,  
Exuberant in vivid verdure cropp'd  
By herds, by flocks innum'rous. Neighb'ring knolls  
Are speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs  
To herdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds 315  
Once yielded rest unbroken, till the name

Of

Of Xerxes shook their quiet. Yet this day  
 Was festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,  
 From toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd  
 Th' enliven'd meadow. Under ev'ry shade 320  
 A hoary minstrel sat ; the maidens dance'd ;  
 Flocks bleated ; oxen low'd ; the horses neigh'd ;  
 With joy the vale resounded ; terror fled ;  
 Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news  
 By Melibœus, hast'ning to his lord, 325  
 Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.  
 While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd.

IN this fair valley old Oileus dwells,  
 The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state  
 The public host. Yon large pavilions mark. 330  
 They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,  
 There tell our charge. This said, they both advance.  
 A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd

In rank, in age superior, wav'd his hand  
To Melibœus, standing near, and spake. 335

By this my faithful messenger I learn,  
That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot  
Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'ercast by time,  
My fight would scarce distinguish friend, or foe,  
A Grecian, or Barbarian. Alpheus then. 340

We come from Lacedæmon, of our king  
Leonidas forerunners. Is he nigh?  
The cordial senior tenderly exclaims.  
I am Oileus. Him a beardless boy  
I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years 345  
Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.  
But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,  
Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.

THEY

BOOK II. LEONIDAS. 59

THEY sit. He still discourfes. Spartan guefts,  
 me an aged foldier you behold. 350

rom Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,  
 ilean Ajax flows my vital fteam,  
 nmix'd with his prefumption. I have borne  
 he higheft functions in the Locrian ftate,  
 ot with difhonor. Self-difmifs'd, my age 355

ath in this valley on my own demefn  
 v'd tranquil, not reclufe. My comrades thefe,  
 ld magiftrates and warriors like myfelf,

leas'd from public care, with me retir'd  
 o rural quiet. Through our laft remains 360  
 f time in fweet garrulity we flide,

counting pafs'd achievements of our prime ;  
 or wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds,  
 re blefs'd, here bleffing, we refide. Thefe flocks,  
 hefe herds and paftures, thefe our num'rous

hinds, 365

And

And poverty, hence exil'd, may divulge  
Our generous abundance. We can spread  
A banquet for an army. By the state  
Once more entreated, we accept a charge,  
To age well-suited. By our watchful care 370  
The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.

He scarce had finish'd, when the ensigns broad  
Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale  
Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound  
Of flutes, soft-warbling in th' expressive mood 375  
Of Dorian sweetness, unadorn'd. Around,  
In notes of welcome ev'ry shepherd tun'd  
His sprightly reed. The damsels shew'd their hair,  
Diversify'd with flowrets. Garlands gay,  
Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dyes 380  
Of amaranths, of jасmin, roses, pinks  
And violets they carry, tripping light

Before

Book H.    L E O N I D A S.    61

Before the steps of grimly-featur'd Mars  
To blend the smiles of Flora with his frown.  
Leonidas they chaunt in silvan lays,                    385  
Him the defender of their meads and groves,  
Him more, than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.  
While Philomela, in her poplar shade  
Awaken'd, strains her emulating throat,  
And joins with liquid-trills the swelling sounds, 390

BEHOLD, Oileus and his ancient train  
Accost Laconia's king, whose looks and words  
Confess remembrance of the Locrian chief.

THRICE hail ! Oileus, Sparta's noble host.  
Thou art of old acquainted with her sons,                    395  
Their laws, their manners. Musical, as brave,  
Train'd to delight in smooth Terpander's lay,  
In Alcman's Dorian measure, we enjoy

In

In thy melodious vale th' unlabour'd strains

Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd. 400

Our heart-felt gladness deems the golden age

Subsisting, where thou governst. Still these tones

Of joy continu'd may thy dwellings hear !

Still may this plenty, unmolested, crown

The favor'd district ! May thy rev'rend dust 405

Have peaceful shelter in thy father's tomb !

Kind heav'n, that merit to my sword impart !

By joy uplifted, forth Oileus broke.

Thou dost recal me then ! O sent to guard

These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from  
shame, 410

Permit thy weary'd soldiers to partake.

Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,

Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.

Book II. LEONIDAS.

63

THE hero full of dignity and years,  
Once bold in action, plac'd now in ease, 415  
Ev'n by his look, benignly cast around,  
Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,  
With heart-effus'd complacency the king  
Accepts the lib'ral welcome ; while his troops,  
To relaxation and repast dismiss'd, 420  
Pitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.

STILL is the evening. Under chestnut shades  
With interweaving poplars spacious stands  
A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,  
The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind 425  
On sage discourse ; which thus Oileus clos'd.

BEHOLD, night lifts her signal to invoke  
That friendly god, who owns the drowfy wand.  
To Mercury this last libation flows.

Fare-



Farewel till morn. They separate, they sleep 430  
All, but Oileus, who forfakes the tent.  
On Melibœus in these words he calls.  
Approach my faithful friend. To him the swain.  
Thy bondman hears thy call. The chief replies.  
Loud for the gath'ring peasantry to heed. 435

COME, Melibœus, it is surely time,  
That my repeated gift, the name of friend  
Thou shouldst accept. The name of bondman  
wounds  
My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,  
Reject that boon, nor let my feeble head, 440  
To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,  
Descend and sleep unthankful in the grave.  
Though yielding nature daily feels decay ;  
Thou dost prevent all care. The gods estrange  
Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast 445

From weeds too oft in aged soils profuse,  
From self-tormenting petulance and pride,  
From jealousy and envy at the fame

Of younger men. Leonidas will dim

My former lustre, as that silver orb

450

Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice.

O Melibœus, these elect of Jove

To certain death advance. Immortal pow'rs!

How social, how endearing is their speech!

How flow in lib'ral cheerfulness their hearts! 455

To such a period verging men like these.

Age well may envy, and that envy take

The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span

Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain

Each earthly joy. Till bless'd Elysium spread 460

Her ever-blooming, inexhausted stores

To their glad fight, be mine the grateful task

To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves

Our

Our vessels large of well-fermented wine,  
From all our gran'ries lift the treasur'd corn. 465  
Go, load the groaning axles. Nor forget  
With garments new to greet Meliffa's nymphs.  
To her a triple change of vestments bear  
With twenty lambs, and twenty speckled kids.  
Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid 470  
Him your director, others to select  
Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,  
Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,  
When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.

THEY heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil 475

Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts  
A ready car. The coursers had enroll'd  
His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.  
By moon-light, floating on the splendid reins,

He

Book II.    L E O N I D A S.                      67

He o'er the busy vale intent is borne                      480

From place to place, o'erlooks, directs, forgets,

That he is old. Mean time the shades of night,

Retiring, wake Dienece. He gives

The word. His pupil seconds. Ev'ry band

Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears. 485

Oileus greets him. In his radiant car

The senior stays reluctant ; but his guest

So wills in Spartan reverence to age.

Then spake the Locrian. To assist thy camp

A chosen band of peasants I detach.                      490

I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care ;

Nor doubt that swain. Oileus, speaking, look'd

On Melibœus. Skilful he commands

These hinds. Him wise, him faithful I have prov'd

More, than Eumæus to Laertes' son.                      495

To him th' Cætæan woods, their devious tracks

Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass

Two

Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,  
My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,  
Well-exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells 500  
On Ceta. Sage Melissa she is call'd,  
Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.  
She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend  
An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.  
Now, servants, bring the sacred wine. Obey'd, 505  
He, from his seat uprising, thus proceeds.

Lo ! from this chalice a libation pure  
To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,  
To their protector, eleutherian Jove,  
To his nine daughters, who record the brave, 510  
To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour ;  
And take an old man's benediction too.

Book II.    L E O N I D A S.    69

HE stopp'd. Affection, struggling in his heart,  
Burst forth again. Illustrious guest, afford  
Another hour. That slender space of time    515  
Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,  
Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,  
File through its narrow'd outlet ; near my side  
Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.

THE king, well-pleas'd, ascends. Slow move  
the steeds    520  
Behind the rear. Oileus grasps his hand,  
Then in the fulness of his soul pursues.

THY veneration for Laconia's laws  
That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,  
Hear me display the melancholy fruits    525  
Of lawless will. When o'er the Lydian plains  
Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,

His

His vassal, Pythius, who in affluent means

Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince

Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host, 530

And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king

Refusing, ev'n augmented from his own.

An act of fancy, not habitual grace,

A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom

Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd 535

To march from Sardis, when with humble tears

The good old man besought him. Let the king

Propitious hear a parent. In thy train

I have five sons. Ah ! leave my eldest born,

Thy future vassal, to sustain my age ! 540

The tyrant fell reply'd. Presumptuous man,

Who art my slave, in this tremendous war,

Is not my person hazarded, my race,

My comfort ? Former merit saves from death

Four of thy offspring. Him, so dearly pris'd, 545

Thy

Thy folly hath destroy'd. His body straight  
 Was hewn afunder. By the public way  
 On either side a bleeding half was cast,  
 And millions pass'd between. O Spartan king,  
 Taught to revere the sanctity of laws, 550  
 The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,  
 His fame with thine. The curses of mankind  
 Give him renown. He marches to destroy,  
 But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,  
 Each eminence is loaded thick with crouds, 555  
 From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,  
 To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.

OFTIMES the king his decent brow inclin'd,  
 Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,  
 Which through th' instructed ear, unceasing  
 flow'd 560  
 In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour



Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind.  
A caufeway broad difclos'd an ancient pile  
Of military fame. A trophy large,  
Compact with crefted morions, targets rude, 565  
With fpears and corfelets, dimm'd by eating age,  
Stood near a lake pellucid, fmooth, profound,  
Of circular expanfe ; whole bofom fhew'd  
A green-flop'd ifland, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,  
And from its center lifting high to view 570  
A marble chapel, on the mafly ftrength  
Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought freeze  
Display'd the fculptor's art. In folemn pomp  
Of obelifks and bufts, and ftory'd urns  
Sepulchral manfions of illuftrious dead 575  
Were fcatter'd round, o'ercaft with fhadows black  
Of yew and cyprefs. In a ferial note  
Oileus, pointing, opens new difcourfe.

BENEATH

Book II. LEONIDAS. 73

**BENEATH** yon turf my ancestors repose.

Oilean Ajax singly was depriv'd 580

Of fun'ral honors there. With impious lust

He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulph

Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,

That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,

By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd. 585

**Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,**

The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.

A race more pious on th' Oïlean hause

Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god

I owe my blifs, my early fame to Pan. 590

Once on the margin of that silent pool

In their nocturnal camp Barbarians lay,

Awaiting morn to violate the dead.

My youth was fir'd. I summon'd from their cots

A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan, 600

Affail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.

He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.  
Not one surviv'd the fury of our swains.  
Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose ;  
Of costly blocks constructed, hence that fane, 605  
Inscrib'd to Pan th' armipotent. O king,  
Be to an old man's vanity benign.  
This frowning emblem of terrific war  
Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.  
This to Barbarian strangers, ent'ring Greece, 610  
Shews, what I was. The marble fount, thou saw'st,  
Of living water, whose transparent flow  
Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,  
The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,  
Shew, what I am ; to Grecian neighbours shew 615  
The hospitality of age. O age,  
Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,  
In bland deportment ? Would thy furrow'd cheeks  
Lose the deformity of time ? Let smiles

Dwell

Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth, 620  
Thy feeble steps will find - - - Abruptly here  
He paus'd. A manly warrior full in fight  
Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,  
Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd  
His rev'rend host. Thou pausest. Let me ask, 625  
Whom do I see, resembling in his form  
A demigod ? In transport then the sage,

It is my son, discover'd by his shield, |  
Thy brave auxiliar, Medon. He sustains  
My ancient honors in his native state, 630  
Which kindly chose my offspring to replace  
Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!  
My life, a tide of joy, which never knew  
A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark  
Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail, 635  
My long and happy course should finish here.

THE chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,  
Saluting thus Leonidas. O king  
Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in fight  
Begin to spread their multitude, and fill 640  
The spacious Malian plain. The king replies.

ACCEPT, illustrious messenger, my thanks.  
With such a brave assistant, as the son  
Of great Oileus, more assur'd I go  
To face those numbers. With his godlike friend 645  
The father, now dismounting from his car,  
Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark  
They all are wafted to the island fane,  
Erected by Oileus, and enrich'd  
With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the  
eye 650  
Of Sparta's gen'ral in extensive scope  
Contemplates each battalion, as they wind  
Along

Book II. LEONIDAS.

77

Along the pool ; whose limpid face reflects  
Their weapons, glist'ning in the early sun.  
Them he to Pan armipotent commends, 655  
His favor thus invoking. God, whose pow'r  
By rumour vain, or Eccho's empty voice  
Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,  
Can difarray whole armies, smile on these,  
Thy worshippers. Thy own Arcadians guard. 660  
Through thee Oïleus triumph'd. On his son,  
On me look down. Our shields auxiliar join  
Against profane Barbarians, who insult  
The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall  
Of this thy shrine. He said, and now intent 665  
To leave the island on Oïleus call'd.

He, Medon answer'd, by his joy and zeal  
Too high transported, and discoursing long,  
Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down

Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd 67  
Amid thy pious commerce with the god,  
Was silently remov'd. The good old chief  
On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,  
Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.

His hast'ning step Leonidas restrains, 67  
Thus fervent prays. O Maia's son, best pleas'd  
When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,  
Watch o'er my venerable friend. Thy balm  
He wants, exhausted by his love to me.  
Sweet sleep, thou soft'nest that intruding pang, 68  
Which gen'rous breasts, so parting, must admit

He said, embark'd, relanded. To his side  
Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the host.

END of the SECOND BOOK.

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK the THIRD.

### The Argument.

*Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ about noon on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is receiv'd by Demophilus, the commander of Theſſia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherouſly recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who ſeeks by a pompous deſcription of the Perſian power to intimidate the Grecian leaders, as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Oeta. He is answer'd by Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes ſends Tygranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp; who are diſmiſs'd by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which laſt, incens'd at the arrogance of Tygranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occaſions a challenge to ſingle combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes after a conference*



*ference with Anaxander declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibæus, a faithful slave of Oileus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ for the defence of another pass in mount Oeta.*

**N**OW in the van Leonidas appears,  
With Medon still conferring. Hast thou  
heard,

He said, among th' innumerable foes  
What chiefs are most distinguish'd? Might we trust  
To fame, reply'd the Locrian, Xerxes boasts 5  
His ablest, bravest counsellor and chief  
In Artemisia, Caria's matchless queen.  
To old Darius benefits had bound  
Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell'd,  
Except by magnanimity, she leads 10  
'The best-appointed squadron in his fleet.

No

Book III. L E O N I D A S.

81

No female softness Artemisia knows,  
 But in maternal love. Her widow'd hand  
 With equity and firmness for her son  
 Administers the sway. Of Doric race 15  
 She still retains the spirit, which from Greece  
 Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs  
 Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,  
 Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supply'd,  
 Not less, than Demaratus, once her king, 20  
 An exile now. Leonidas rejoins.

SON of Oileus, like thy father wife,  
 Like him partake my confidence. Thy words  
 Recal an æra, sad'ning all my thoughts.  
 That injur'd Spartan shar'd the regal sway 25  
 With one----Alas ! my brother, eldest born,  
 Unblest'd by nature, favor'd by no god,  
 Cleomenes. Insanity of mind,

E 5

Malig-

Malignant passions, impious acts deform'd  
 A life, coneluded by his own fell hand. 30  
 Against his colleague envious he suborn'd  
 Leutychides. Him perjury and fraud  
 Plac'd on the feat, by Demaratus held  
 Unstain'd in lustre. Here Oileus' son.

My future service only can repay 35  
 Thy confidential friendship. Let us close  
 The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.  
 Each face in transport glows. Now Ceta rear'd  
 His tow'ring forehead. With impatient steps  
 On rush'd the phalanx, founding pæans high ; 40  
 As if the present deity of fame  
 Had from the summit shewn her dazzling form,  
 With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,  
 Her adamantin trumpet in her hand  
 To celebrate their valour. From the van 45

Leoni-

Leonidas advances like the sun,  
When through dividing clouds his presence stays  
Their sweeping rack, and stills the clam'rous wind.  
The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan  
The air no longer. Motionless their spears. 50  
His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,  
Which thus finds utterance from his eager lips.

ALL hail ! Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs,  
Presiding here. All hail ! ye silvan gods,  
Ye fountain nymphs, who send yon lucid rills 55  
In broken murmurs down the rugged steep.  
Receive us, O benignant, and support  
The cause of Greece. Conceal the secret paths,  
Which o'er these crags, and through their forests  
wind,

Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone 60  
By your immortal footsteps. O defend

Your

Your own recesses, nor let impious war  
Profane the solemn silence of your groves.  
Then on your hills your praises shall you hear  
From those, whose deeds shall tell th' approving  
world, 65

That not to undeservers did ye grant  
Your high protection. You, my valiant friends,  
Now rouse the gen'rous spirit, which inflames  
Your hearts ; exert the vigour of your arms :  
That in the bosoms of the brave and free 70  
Your memorable actions may survive ;  
May sound delightful in the ear of time,  
Long, as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,  
Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops  
So near to heav'n, your monuments of fame. 75

As in some torrid region, where the head  
Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load ;

If

If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark  
Invade the parching ground ; a sudden blaze  
Sweeps o'er the crackling champain : through his  
    hoft 80

Not with less swiftness to the furthest ranks  
The words of great Leonidas diffus'd  
A more, than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart  
Diffends with thoughts of glory, such, as raise  
The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire ; 85  
When danger most tremendous in his form  
Seems in their fight most lovely. On their minds  
Imagination pictures all the scenes  
Of war, the purple field, the heaps of death,  
The glitt'ring trophy, pil'd with Persian arms. 90

BUT lo ! the Grecian leaders, who before  
Were station'd near Thermopylæ, salute  
Laconia's king. The Theſpian chief, ally'd

To

86            L E O N I D A S.    Book III.

To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks,  
 An ancient warrior. From behind his casque, 95  
 Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,  
 The slender hairs, all-silver'd o'er by time,  
 Flow'd venerable down. He thus began.

Joy now shall crown the period of my days ;  
 And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep ;    100  
 Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,  
 Our common parent ; be it, as the gods  
 Shall best determine. For the present hour  
 I bless their bounty, which hath giv'n my age  
 To see the brave Leonidas, and bid            105  
 That hero welcome on this glorious shore  
 To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.

HERE too the crafty Anaxander spake.  
 Of all the Thebans we, rejoicing, hail

The

The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call. 110

O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes

A dark'ning veil extend ! or those alone

By fame be curs'd, whose impious counsels turn

Their countrymen from virtue ! Thebes was sunk,

Her glory bury'd in dishonest sloth. 115

To wake her languor gen'rous Alpheus came,

The messenger of freedom. O accept

Our grateful hearts; thou, Alpheus, art the cause,

That Anaxander from his native gates

Not single joins this host, nor tamely these, 120

My chosen friends, behind their walls remain.

Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,

This loftiest part of Cæta. This o'erlooks

The streights, and far beyond their northern mouth

Extends our sight across the Malian plain. 125

Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,

Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath

march'd,

Dis-



DISGUIS'D in seeming worth, he ended here,  
The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd,  
By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue, 130  
His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd  
To grace perfidious counsels, and to clothe  
In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,  
Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,  
Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came. 135  
Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,  
The Theban chiefs, and nightly councils held  
How to betray the Spartans, or deject  
By consternation. Up the arduous slope  
With him each leader to the summit climbs. 140  
Thence a tremendous prospect they command,  
Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,  
Spread like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,  
No rock, no promontory stops the sight  
Unbounded, as it wanders ; while the moon, 145  
Resplen-

Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb  
Surveys th' interminate expanse, and throws  
Her rays abroad to deck in snowy light  
The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp ;  
A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightiest king, 150  
Or fiercest conqu'ror, whose blood-thirsty pride,  
Dissolving all the sacred ties, which bind  
The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd  
The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.  
Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes, 155  
The tow'rs of Memphis, and those pregnant fields,  
Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd  
Around Sesostris ; who with trophies fill'd  
The vanquish'd east, who o'er the rapid foam  
Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad 160  
Of Ganges sent his formidable name.  
Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds  
E'er met such numbers, not when Ninus led

Th'

Th' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates  
Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd 165  
Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her streets,  
The rage of dire Semiramis they bore  
Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left  
His blood-stain'd current turbid with their dead.

YET of the chiefs, contemplating this scene, 170  
Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand;  
Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes  
They traverse: while in meditation near  
The trech'rous Malian waits, collecting all  
His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r; 175  
Nor yet with falsehood arms his fraudulent tongue  
To feign a tale of terror. Truth herself  
Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance  
Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay  
Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd 180  
By

Book III. L E O N I D A S. 91

By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live,  
From liberty divorc'd. Requested soon,  
He breaks his artful silence. Greeks and friends,  
Can I behold my native Malian fields,  
Presenting hostile millions to your sight, 185  
And not in grief suppress the horrid tale,  
Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips.  
On Thracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes ;  
Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,  
A mighty bridge restrain'd th' outrageous  
waves, 190  
And stemm'd th' impetuous current: while in  
arms

The universal progeny of men  
Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood  
By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,  
Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files 195  
From Æthiopia, Ægypt's tawny sons,  
Arabians,

Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength  
Of Asia, and of Libya. Neptune groan'd  
Beneath their number, and indignant heav'd  
His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain too  
The violence of Eurus and the North,  
With rage combin'd, against th' unyielding pile  
Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world  
Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted pass  
To cover Thracia's regions. They accept 205  
A Persian lord. They range their hardy race  
Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,  
The brave Thessalian horse with ev'ry Greek,  
Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,  
Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods, 210  
Who in a moment by thy will supreme  
Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,  
Canst raise the weak to safety, Oh ! impart  
Thy instant succour ! Interpose thy arm !

With

Book III. L E O N I D A S. 93

With lightning blast their standards ! Oh ! con-  
found 215

With tripple-bolted thunder Asia's tents,  
Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour  
An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks.  
Resistance else were vain against a host,  
Which overspreads Thessalia. Far beyond 220  
That Malian champain, stretching wide below,  
Beyond the utmost measure of the fight  
From this aspiring cliff, the hostile camp  
Contains yet mightier numbers ; who have drain'd  
The beds of copious rivers with their thirst, 225  
Who with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.

THEN we shall give them battle in the shade,  
Dieneces reply'd. Not calmly thus  
Diomedon. On Persia's camp he bent  
His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er, 230  
Then

Then fierce exclaim'd. Bellona, turn and view  
With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage,  
By regal madness for thy rage prepar'd  
To exercise its horrors. Whet thy teeth,  
Voracious death. All Asia is thy prey. 235  
Contagion, famine, and the Grecian sword  
For thy insatiate hunger will provide  
Variety of carnage. He concludes ;  
While on the host immense his cloudy brow  
Is fix'd disdainful, and their strength defies. 240

MEAN time an eastern herald down the pass  
Was seen, slow-moving tow'ards the Phocian wall.  
From Asia's monarch delegated, came  
Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill  
Lecnidias conducts th' impatient chiefs. 245  
By them environ'd, in his tent he sits ;  
Where thus Tigranes their attention calls.

Book III. LEONIDAS.

95

AMASSADORS from Persia's king we stand  
Before you, Grecians. To display the pow'r  
Of our great master were a needless task. 250

The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,  
Invincible, exalted on a throne,  
Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd  
To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impress'd  
With awe, and low submission. Yet I swear 255

By yon refulgent orb, which flames above,  
The glorious symbol of eternal pow'r,  
This military throng, this shew of war  
Well nigh persuade me, you have never heard  
That name, at whose commanding sound the  
banks 260

Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,  
Th' Ægyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge  
Obedient roll. O impotent and rash !

Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,

And



And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind, 265  
Deign to preserve. Resign your arms. Disperse  
All to your cities. There let humblest hands  
With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy  
boughs,  
Entwining, crown some eminence with shade, 270  
The tempests rush sonorous, and between  
The crashing branches roar ; by fierce disdain,  
By indignation thus the Grecians rous'd,  
In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech :  
But ev'ry tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's  
king 275  
This brief reply deliver'd from his seat.

O PERSIAN, when to Xerxes thou returnst,  
Say, thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r.

Book III. LEONIDAS. 97

Then say, thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,  
Which dares his boasted millions to the field. 280

HE adds no more. Th' ambassadors retire.  
Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines  
Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.  
In slow solemnity they all proceed,  
And fullen silence ; but their looks denote 285.  
Far more, than speech could utter. Wrath contracts

The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth  
Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.  
Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd  
The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face 290  
Of either Persian arrogance, incens'd  
By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost freight  
They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents  
Of Asia, there discov'ring wide to view

Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the  
heart 295

Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,  
Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase.

O ARIMANIUS, origin of ill,  
Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r  
Thus with the curse of madness to afflict 300  
These wretched men? But since thy dreadful ire  
To irresistible perdition dooms  
The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.  
Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall,  
Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood. 305

ENRAG'D, the stern Diomedon replies.  
Thou base dependant on a lawless king,  
Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know,  
That I beheld the Marathonian field?

Where

**Book III. LEONIDAS. 99**

Where like the Libyan sands before the wind 310  
Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears;  
Where thou perhaps by ignominious flight  
Didst from this arm protect thy shiv'ring limbs.  
O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight !  
Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie 315  
To dogs a banquet. With uplifted palms  
Tygranes then. Omnipotent support  
Of scepter'd Xerxes, Horomazes, hear !  
To thee his first victorious fruits of war  
Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils, 320  
Which from this Grecian by the rising dawn  
In fight of either host my strength shall rend.

At length Phraortes, interposing, spake.  
I too would find among the Grecian chiefs  
One, who in battle dares abide my lance. 325

THE gallant youth of Thespia swift reply'd.  
Thou look'st on me, O Persian. Worthier far  
Thou might have singled from the ranks of Greece,  
Not one more willing to essay thy force.  
Yes, I will prove before the eye of Mars, 330  
How far the prowess of her meanest chief  
Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.

THIS said, the Persians to their king repair,  
Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find  
Each foldier, poising his extended spear, 335  
His weighty buckler bracing on his arm  
In warlike preparation. Through the files  
Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,  
By exhortation aids their native warmth.  
Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd, 340  
Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake.

WHAT has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,  
Alas ! 'in vain attempting to confound  
The Spartan valour ? With redoubled fires,  
See, how their bosoms glow. They wish to die ; 345  
They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.  
Too soon th' insuperable foes will spread  
Promiscuous havoc round, and Thebans share  
The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass  
Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach 350  
In our behalf ? That Xerxes may be warn'd  
To spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck ;  
When his high-swoln resentment like a flood,  
Increas'd by stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece  
With desolation. Epialtes here. 355

Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair ?  
Is there a path on Cæta's hills unknown  
To Epialtes ? Over trackless rocks,

Through mazy woods my secret steps can pass.  
Farewel. I go. Thy merit shall be told 360  
To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour ;  
When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.

MEAN time a wary, comprehensive care  
To ev'ry part Leonidas extends ;  
As in the human frame through ev'ry vein, 365  
And artery minute, the ruling heart  
Its vital pow'rs disperses. In his tent  
The prudent chief of Locris he consults ;  
He summons Melibæus by the voice  
Of Agis. In humility not mean, 370  
By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,  
Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house  
Of Ajax honor'd, bows before the king,  
Who gracious spake. The confidence bestow'd,  
The praise by sage Oïleus might suffice 375  
To

To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,  
Have found thee skilful, active and discreet.  
Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,  
The upper freights, the Phocian camp explore.

O CONDESCENSION, Melibœus then, 380  
More ornamental to the great, than gems,  
A purple robe, or diadem! The king  
Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.  
Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.  
Oileus will rejoice, and, smiling, say, 385  
An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.

HE leads the way, while Agis, following, spake.  
O swain, distinguish'd by a lib'ral mind,  
Who were thy parents? Where thy place of birth?  
What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house? 390  
Oileus sure thy liberty would grant,



Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace ;  
When in a station equal to thy worth  
Thou mayst be rank'd. The prudent hind began.

In different stations different virtues dwell, 395  
All reaping different benefits. The great  
In dignity and honors meet reward  
For acts of bounty, and heroic toils.  
A servant's merit is obedience, truth,  
Fidelity ; his recompense content. 400  
Be not offended at my words, O chief.  
They, who are free, with envy may behold  
This bondman of Oileus. To his trust,  
His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r  
From his pure model could not fail to mold 405  
What, thou entitlest lib'ral. Whence I came,  
Or who my parents is to me unknown.  
In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold.

They

Book III. L E O N I D A S. 105

They took their price. They huff'd th' atrocious  
deed.

Dear to Oileus and his race I throve; 410

And whether noble, or ignoble born,

I am contented, studious of their love

Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire

Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own

To their condition, happy in my lord, 415

Himself of men most happy. Agis bland

Rejoins. O born with talents to become

A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,

Thou dost the more deserve ! Laconia's king

Discerns thy merit through its modest veil. 420

Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.

Long may contentment, justly pris'd, be thine.

But should the state demand thee, I foresee,

Thou wouldst like others in the field excel,

Wouldst share in glory. Blithe return'd the swain. 425

Not ev'ry service is confin'd to arms.  
Thou shalt behold me in my present state  
Not useless. If the charge, Oileus gave,  
I can accomplish, meriting his praise,  
And thy esteem, my glory will be full. 430

BOTH pleas'd in converse thus pursue their way,  
Where Cæta lifts her summits huge to heav'n  
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd  
Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,  
Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears 435  
A call of welcome. There his course he stays.

END of the THIRD BOOK.

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK the FOURTH.

### The Argument.

*Tigranes and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report, that the Grecians are determin'd to maintain the pass against him; but by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs and manners. He advances to the entrance of the streights, and, surpris'd at the behaviour of*

*of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus ; which occasions a conversation between them on the mercenary forces of Persia, and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylæ. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chuses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and on her departure to the Persian camp is surpris'd by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of mount Oeta.*

**T**HE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt  
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune  
lav'd.

The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,  
Which open channels to pellucid streams  
In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame,  
Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,

5

Foams

Book IV. LEONIDAS. 109

Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face  
Of this broad champain numberless are pitch'd

Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood  
To rich Theffalia's confines they extend. 10

They fill the vallies, late profusely blest'd  
In nature's vary'd beauties. Hostile spears  
Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.

Pale die her flowrets under barb'rous feet.  
Embracing ivy from its rock is torn. 15

The lawn, dismantled of its verdure, fades.

The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,  
Leave desolate the stream. Elab'rate domes,

To heav'n devoted in recesses green,  
Had felt rude force, insensible and blind 20

To elegance and art. The statues, busts,

The figur'd vases, mutilated, lie

With chisell'd columns, their engraven freeze,

Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.

YET

YET unpolluted, is a part reserv'd 25  
In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot  
Of Aleuadian princes, who, allies  
To Xerxes, reign'd in Thessaly. There glow  
Inviolatè the shrubs. There branch the trees,  
Sons of the forest. Over downy moss 30  
Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,  
There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,  
Wind to retreats delectable, to grotts,  
To silvan structures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,  
Enliven'd all and musical with birds 35  
Of vocal sweetness, in relucènt plumes  
Innumèrably various. Lulling falls  
Of liquid crystal from perennial founts  
Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen,  
The noble dames of Persia, here the train 40  
Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,  
In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,  
Possess'd

**Book IV. LEONIDAS.**

**III**

Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,  
A tranquil station. Ariana here,  
Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung, 45  
Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills  
Her drooping forehead. Love-afflicted fair !  
All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs  
To her sad ear. From flow'rs, and florid plants  
To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes, 50  
Transmit no pleasure! Sedulous in vain,  
Her tender slaves in harmony with lutes  
Of soothing sound their warbled voices blend  
To charm her sadness. This, the precious part  
Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge, 55  
A Satrap, long experienc'd, who presides  
O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,  
Bold, resolute and faithful, he commands  
The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise  
The distant navy, dancing on the foam, 60  
Th'un-



Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,  
With Xerxes' tent, august in structure plac'd  
A central object to attract the eyes  
Of subject millions. Thither now resort  
Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find 65  
Inclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,  
The potentates of Asia. Near his side  
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,  
His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave,  
Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords. 70  
Their scepter'd master from his radiant seat  
Looks down imperious. So the stately tow'r  
Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow  
With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd  
The huge extent of Babylon with all 75  
Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.  
This day his banners to unfurl in Greece  
The monarch's will decides; but first ordains,  
That

That grateful hymns should celebrate the name  
Of Horomazes : So the Persians call'd 80  
The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white,  
The Magi-rang'd before th' unfolded tent.  
Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rds the sacred flame  
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

FROM Zoroastres was the song deriv'd, 85  
Who on the hills of Persia from his cave,  
By flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,  
Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd,  
How Horomazes, radiant source of good,  
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe 90  
In fruitfulness and beauty : how with stars  
By him the heav'ns were spangled : how the sun,  
Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light,  
And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,  
Burst from the east at his creating voice ; 95  
When

When straight beyond the golden verge of day  
Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,  
Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,  
The author foul of evil : how with shades  
From his dire mansion he deform'd the works 100  
Of Horomazes, turn'd to noxious heat  
The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch,  
That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds,  
Whence pestilence and famine : how the pow'r  
Of Horomazes in the human breast 105  
Benevolence and equity infus'd,  
Truth, temperance, and wisdom sprung from heav'n:  
When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul  
With falsehood and injustice, with desires  
Insatiable, with violence and rage, 110  
Malignity and folly. If the hand  
Of Horomazes on precarious life  
Sheds wealth and pleasure ; swift th' infernal god  
With

**Book IV. LEONIDAS.**

**215**

With wild excess, or av'rice blasts the joy.

Thou Horomazes, victory dost give. **115**

By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.

Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms

The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd

The Hellespont ; thou o'er its chafing breast

The destin'd master of the world didst lead, **120**

This day his promis'd glories to enjoy : . .

When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend ;

Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall

Before thy might, and evil be no more.

**THE** Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold, **125**

From her tall ship between a double row

Of naval warriors, while a golden ray

Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.

In her enrich'd accoutrements of war, **129**

The full-wrought buckler, and high-crested helm,

**In**

In Caria first devis'd, across the beach  
Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,  
From Taurus hewn mature in spiry pride,  
Now by the sailor in its canvass wings  
Voluminous, and dazzling pendants drefs'd, 135  
On Artemisia's own imperial deck  
Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove  
Of crouded masts surrounding. In her heart  
Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,  
Who fill with impious vanity their king ; 140  
As when he lash'd the Hellespont with rods,  
Amid the billows cast a golden chain  
To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe  
Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd  
On her young son, who, pacing near in arms 145  
Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,  
Look'd up, and waken'd by repeated smiles  
Maternal fondness, melting in that eye,

Which

Book IV. L E O N I D A S. 117

Which scowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat  
At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes, 150  
Invited ; while in adoration bow'd  
Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay,  
Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,  
As from a present deity, too bright  
For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes. 155  
At length in abject phrase Tigranes thus.

O XERXES, live for ever ! Gracious lord,  
Who dost permit thy servants to approach  
Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess  
Thy majesty and radiance. May the pow'r 160  
Of Horomazes stretch thy regal arm  
O'er endless nations from the Indian shores  
To those wide floods, which beat Iberian strands,  
From northern Tanais to the source of Nile !  
Still from thy head may Arimanius bend 165  
Against

Against thy foes his malice ! Yonder Greeks,  
Already smit with frenzy by his wrath,  
Reject thy profer'd clemency. They chuse  
To magnify thy glory by their fall.

THE monarch, turning to his brothers, spake. 170  
Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe  
These tidings ? Sure these slaves have never dar'd  
To face the Grecians, but delude our ears  
With base impostures, which their fear suggests.

HE frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm reply'd. 175  
O from his servants may the king avert  
His indignation ! Greece was fam'd of old  
For martial spirit, and a dauntless breed.  
I once have try'd their valour. To my words  
Abrocomes can witness. When thy fire 180  
And ours, Darius, to Athenian-shores

With

With Artaphernes brave and Datis sent  
Our tender youth ; at Marathon we found,  
How weak the hope, that numbers could dismay  
A foe, resolv'd on victory, or death. 185  
Yet not, as one contemptible, or base,  
Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks  
With such persisting courage be endu'd,  
Soon as the king shall summon to the field,  
He shall behold me in the dang'rous van 190  
Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,  
Or sink beneath them. Xerxes swift rejoin'd.

WHY over Asia, and the Libyan foil  
With all their nations doth my potent arm  
Extend its scepter ? Wherefore do I sweep 195  
Across the earth with millions in my train ?  
Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails ?  
Why all this pow'r, unless th' almighty's will



Decreed one master to the subject world ;  
And that the earth's extremity alone                      200  
Should bound my empire ? He for this reduc'd  
The Nile's revolted fons, enlarg'd my fway  
With sandy Libya, and the fultry clime  
Of Æthiopia. He for this subdu'd  
The Hellefpontic foam, and taught the fea                      205  
Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more,  
That heav'n, deserting my imperial caufe,  
With courage more, than human, will inspire  
Yon defpicable Grecians, and expunge  
The common fears of nature from their breasts. 210

THE monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began.  
The king commands us to reveal our thoughts.  
Incredulous he hears. But time and truth  
Not Horomazes can arreft. Thy beams                      214  
To instant light'ning, Mithra, mayft thou change  
For

Book IV. LEONIDAS. 421

For my destruction ; may th'offended king  
Frown on his servant, cast a loathing eye ;  
If the assertion of my lips be false :  
Our further march those Grecians will oppose.

AMID th' encircling peers Argestes sat, 220  
A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,  
Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves  
Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,  
Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute pay'd  
To this great Satrap. Through the servile court 225  
Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts  
Of mean submission ; none more skill'd to gain  
The royal favor ; none, who better knew  
The phrase, the look, the gesture of a slave ;  
None more detesting Artemisia's worth, 230  
By her none more despis'd. His master's eye  
He caught, then spake. Display thy dazzling state,  
VOL. I. G Thou

Thou deity of Asia. Greece will hide  
Before thy presence her dejected face.

LAST Artemisia, rising stern, began. 235

Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,  
Unprofitably wasting precious hours  
In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,  
Rang'd in defence of that important pass,  
Will fight, or fly? A question by the sword 240  
To be decided. Still to narrow freights  
By land, by sea thy council hath confin'd  
Each enterprise of war. In numbers weak  
Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith  
Repuls'd thy navy----But whate'er thy will, 245  
Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king  
The difference see by trial in the field  
Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve  
These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.

The

Book IV. L E O N I D A S. 123

The future stage of war thyself explore. 250

Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,

That such a foe to splendour will submit,

Whom steel, not gold must vanquish. Thou provide

Thy mail, Argestes. Not in filken robes,

Not as in council with an oily tongue, 255

But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,

Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.

THE king arose—No more. Prepare my car.

The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.

We will ourselves advance to view the foe. 260

THE monarch will'd ; and suddenly he heard

His trampling horses. High on silver wheels

The iv'ry car with azure sapphirs shone,

Cærulean beryls, and the jasper green,

The emerald, the ruby's glowing bluish, 265

The flaming topaz with its golden beam,  
The pearl, th'empurpled amethyst, and all  
The various gems, which India's mines afford  
To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold  
A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd 270  
His stately neck, and o'er the royal head  
Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous  
steeds,

Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd  
In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.  
Not those of old, to Hercules refus'd 275  
By false Laomedon, nor they, which bore  
The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear  
Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vye  
In strength, or beauty. In obedient pride  
They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air 280  
They toss their foreheads. On their glitt'ning  
chests

The

Book IV. LEONIDAS.

125

The silver manes disport. The king ascends.

Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.

The charioteer now shakes th' effulgent reins,

Strong Patirampes. At the signal bound 285

Th' attentive steeds ; the chariot flies : behind,

Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field.

Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain

Of vast expansion in battalia wait

The eastern bands. To these th' imperial

wheels, 290

By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,

Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son

With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach

Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.

He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host 295

Roll back by nations, and admit their lord

With all his Satraps. As from crystal domes,

Built underneath an arch of pendent seas,

When that stern pow'r, whose trident rules the  
floods,

With each cærulean deity ascends, 300

Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep

Divides its bosom to th' emerging god ;

So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,

On either side receding : when, as down

Th' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost, 305

A momentary gloom o'ercaft his mind,

While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears ;

That, soon as time a hundred years had told,

Not one among those millions should survive.

Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud ? 310

Was it, that once humanity could touch

A tyrant's breast ? Or rather did thy foul

Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought,

That all thy pow'r was mortal ? But the veil

Of sadness soon forsook his brightning eye, 315

As

**Book IV. LEONIDAS.** 127

As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,

And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.

Elate the mingled prospect he surveys

Of glitt'ring files unnumber'd, chariots scyth'd,

On thund'ring axles roll'd, and haughty steeds, 320

In sumptuous trappings clad, Barbaric pomp.

While gorgeous banners to the sun expand

Their streaming volumes of relucant gold,

Preeminent amidst tiaras gemm'd,

Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears 325

In number equal to the bladed grass,

Whose living green in vernal beauty clothes.

Theſſalia's vale. What pow'rs of sounding verse

Can to the mind present th' amazing scene ?

Not thee, whom rumour's fabling voice de-  
lights, 330

Poetic fancy, to my aid I call ;

But thou, historic truth, support my song,

G 4

Which



Which shall the various multitude display,  
Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.

THE Persians first in scaly corselets shone, 335  
A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy  
The liberty, their injur'd fathers lost,  
Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength  
Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd  
The victor's head above his country's laws. 340  
Their tongues were practic'd in the words of truth,  
Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,  
To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,  
To dart the javelin ; but untaught to form  
The ranks of war, with unconnected force, 345  
With ineffectual fortitude they rush'd,  
As on a fence of adamant, to pierce  
Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,  
And osier-woven targets they oppos'd

To

To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields. 350

On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,

Impenetrable. With a golden gloss

Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins

Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,

Well-furnish'd quivers on their shoulders hung, 355

And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.

Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,

The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once

From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.

Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd. 360

The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,

From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,

And white with lillies, water'd by the floods

Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave

The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings. 365

All other streams the royal lip disdains.

Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime,

Dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,

To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,

Bent by its foodful burden sheds, uncap'd, 370

Its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil

With future harvests ; while in ev'ry wood

Their precious labours on the loaden boughs

The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons

Display their brazen casques, unskilful work 375

Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,

O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks

Within the mighty Babylonian gates

They dwell, and where still mightier once in sway

Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial seat 380

Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldaea joins,

The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide

There Belus first discern'd the various course

Of heav'n's bright planets, and the chafing

stars

Book IV. LEONIDAS.

123

With names distinguish'd ; whence himself was  
deem'd. 385.

The first of gods. His sky-ascending fane

In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.

Drawn from the bounteous foil, by Ochus lav'd;

The Bactrians stood, and rough in skins of goats.

The Paricanian archers. Caspian ranks 390

From barren mountains, from the joyless coast

Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,

Their scymetars upheld, and cary bows.

The Indian tribes, a threefold host compose.

Part guide the courser, part the rapid car ; 395

The rest on foot within the bending cane

For slaughter fix the iron-pointed reed.

They o'er the Indus from the distant verge

Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd

By lavish nature. There the season bland 400

Bestows a double harvest. Honey'd shrubs,

The

The cinamon, the spikenard blefs their fields.  
Array'd in native wealth, each warrior fhines.  
His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,  
Encircled, wear a bracelet, ftarr'd with gems. 405  
Such were the nations, who to Xerxes fent  
Their mingled aids of infantry and horfe.

Now, Mufe, recite, what multitudes obfcur'd  
The plain on foot, or elevated high  
On martial axles, or on camels beat 410  
The loofen'd mold. The Parthians firft appear,  
Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,  
From woods, nor yet for warlike fteeds renown'd.  
Near them the Sogdians, Dadices arrange,  
Gandarians and Chorafmians. Sacian throngs 415  
From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,  
From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,  
A bound of Perfia's empire. Wild, untam'd,  
To

Book IV. LEONIDAS.

133

To fury prone their deserts they forsook.

A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous ax 420

The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque

O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone.

In arms like Persians the Saranges flood.

High, as their knees, the shapely buskins clung

Around their legs. Magnificent they trod 425

In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are seen

The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train,

In skins of goats rude-vested. But in spoils

Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards

The graceful range of Æthiopians shews 430

An equal stature, and a beauteous frame.

Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,

And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song

Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,

As foes to virtue. From their seat remote 435

On Nilus' verge above th' Egyptian bound

Forc'd

Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,  
These friends of hospitality and peace,  
Themselves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war  
Against a land, whose climate, and whose name 440  
To them were strange. With hardest stone they  
point

The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,  
Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,  
They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd  
With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians  
march'd, 445

From where Carambis with projected brows  
O'erlooks the dusky Euxin, wrapt in mists,  
From where through flow'rs, which paint his va-  
ry'd banks,

Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands succeed;  
The Matienians, Mariandenians next ; 450  
To them the Syrian multitudes, who range  
Among

Among the cedars on the shaded ridge  
Of Libanus ; who cultivate the glebe,  
Wide-water'd by Orontes ; who reside  
Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded  
palms

455

The foodful date, which clusters on the plains  
Of rich Damascus. All, who bear the name  
Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,  
With those, who gather from the fragrant shrub  
The aromatic balsam, and extract  
Its milky juice along the lovely side  
Of Jordan, winding, till immers'd he sleeps.  
Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures  
Th' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance,  
To them their ancient colony are join'd,  
Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts  
Of strong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,  
Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain.  
Whence

460

465



Whence with collected waters, fierce and deep,  
His passage rending through diminish'd rocks, 470  
To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream  
Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides ;  
He, stealing imperceptibly, sustains  
The green profusion of Armenia's meads.

Now strange to view, in simular attire, 475  
But far unlike in manners to the Greeks,  
Appear the Lydians. Wantonneſs and ſport  
Were all their care. Beſide Cayſter's brink,  
Or ſmooth Mæander, winding ſilent by,  
Beſide Pactolean waves, among the vines 480  
Of Tmolus riſing, or the wealthy tide  
Of golden-fanded Hermus they allure  
The ſight, enchanted by the graceful dance ;  
Or with melodious ſweetneſs charm the air,  
And melt to ſoſteſt languiſhment the ſoul. 485  
What

Book IV. LEONIDAS.

137

What to the field of danger could incite  
These tender sons of luxury ? The last  
Of their fell sov'reign drove their shiv'ring backs  
Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main,  
And shook beneath their trembling steps the  
pile,

490

Conjoining Asia and the western world.

To them Mœonia hot with sulph'rous mines  
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,  
Unblest'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil ;  
Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd 495  
By conflagration. Helmets press their brows.

Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests  
A sword is girt ; and hairy hides compose  
Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left  
Olympus wood-envelop'd, left the meads, 500  
Wash'd by Caïcus, and the baneful tide  
Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance

An

An ancient nation, who in early times  
 By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land  
 Esteem'd less dear, than freedom, and exchange'd 505  
 Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours  
 A freezing current, for the distant flood  
 Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,  
 Their habitation to the sacred feet  
 Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan 510  
 Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn  
 On Sangar now, as once on Strymon lost.  
 The ruddy skins of foxes cloth'd their heads.  
 Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moen.  
 A vest embrac'd their bodies ; while abroad, 515  
 Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.  
 But other Thracians, who their former name  
 Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,  
 With horns of bulle in imitating brass,  
 Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phoenician cloth 520  
 Their

Book IV. L E O N I D A S.

139

Their legs infolded. Wont to chace the wolf,  
A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still  
On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,  
Their huge array discov'ring, swell his soul  
With more, than mortal pride? The cluster'd  
bands

525

Of Moschians and Macronians now appear,  
The Mosynœcians, who, on berries fed,  
In wooden tow'rs, along the Pontic sands  
Repose their painted limbs; the mirthful race  
Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds 530  
Delight in play and laughter. Then advance  
In garments, buckled on their spacious chests,  
A people, destin'd in eternal verse,  
Ev'n thine, sublime Mœonides, to live.  
These are the Milyans. Solymi their name 535  
In thy celestial strains, Pisidia's hills  
Their dwelling. Once a formidable train

They

They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war.

Now doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,

Themselves unner'd by thralldom, they must

leave

540

Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.

The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,

Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,

A dreery waste of sands, which mock the toil

Of patient culture; save one favor'd spot, 545

Which from the wild emerges like an isle,

Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines

Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice, which scorns

The injuries of time : yet nature's hand

Had sown their rocks with coral; had enrich'd 550

Their desert hills with veins of sapphirs blue,

Which on the turbant shine. On ev'ry neck

The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.

The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,

Equipp'd

Equipp'd like Colchians, weild a falchion small. 555

Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood,

Their lances short, of hides undrefs'd their shields.

The Colchians march'd from Phafis, from the  
Strand,

Where once Medea, fair enchantrefs, flood,

And, wond'ring, view'd the firft advent'rous  
keel, 360

Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's fide

The demigods defcended. They repair'd

To her fell fire's inhospitable hall.

His blooming graces Jafon there difclos'd.

With ev'ry art of eloquence divine 565

He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard,

She gaz'd in fatal ravifhment, and lov'd.

Then to the hero fhe refigns her heart.

Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.

She lulls the fleeplefs dragon. O'er the main 570

He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair,  
The destin'd victim of his trech'rous vows.  
The hostile Colchians then purfu'd their flight  
In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,  
Or to recal the long-forgotten wrong 575  
Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece  
With desolation. Next in Median garb  
A croud appear'd, who left the peopled isles  
In Persia's gulph, and round Arabia strewn.  
Some in their native topaz were adorn'd, 580  
From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung ;  
Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood  
Around Casitis' verge. For battle range  
Those, who reside, where, all beset with palms,  
Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king, 585  
Who nam'd of old the Erythræan main.  
On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat, array'd  
In skins terrific, brandishing their darts

Of

Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.  
Not Libya's deserts from tyrannic sway 590  
Could hide her sons ; much less could freedom dwell  
Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields :  
Where spicy Cassia, where the fragrant reed,  
Where myrrh, and hallow'd frankincence perfume  
The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size 595  
Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid vest  
Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.  
Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs  
Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.

SUCH were the numbers, which, from Asia  
led, 600

In base prostration bow'd before the wheels  
Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more  
The Malian sand o'ershadow ? Forward rolls  
The regal car through nations, who in arms,

In



In order'd ranks unlike the orient tribes, 605  
Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught  
To bend the servile knee, erect they stood ;  
Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight  
Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,  
Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons 610  
Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force  
Had gather'd round his standards. Murm'ring here,  
The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd ;  
Here on his steed the brave Thessalian frown'd ;  
There pin'd reluctant multitudes, of Greece 615  
Redundant plants, in colonies dispers'd  
Between Byzantium; and the Malian bay.

THROUGH all the nations, who ador'd his pride,  
Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was pass'd ;  
Nor yet among those millions could be found 620  
One, who in beauteous feature might compare,

Or

Or tow'ring size with Xerxes. O possess'd  
Of all, but virtue, doom'd to shew, how mean,  
How weak without her is unbounded pow'r,  
The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state, 625  
How insecure of happiness, how vain !

Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, by  
heav'n

From none withheld, which oft to thousands proves  
Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage ;  
Which in consuming sickness, age, or pain 630  
Becomes at last a soothing hope to all :

Thou, who couldst weep, that nature's gentle  
hand

Should lay her weary'd offspring in the tomb ;  
Yet couldst remorseless from their peaceful seats  
Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride, 635  
To famine, plague and massacre a prey ;  
What didst thou merit from the injur'd world ?

What suff'rings to compensate for the tears  
Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,  
For all this waste of nature ? On his host      640  
Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty sight,  
To Demaratus then directs his voice.

My father, great Darius, to thy mind  
Recal, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd  
Thy wand'ring steps, expell'd their native home. 645  
My favor too remember. To beguile  
Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth  
Would ill become thee. With confid'rate eyes  
Look back on these battalions. Now declare,  
If yonder Grecians will oppose their march. 650

To him the exile. Deem not, mighty lord,  
I will deceive thy goodness by a tale  
To give them glory, who degraded mine.

Nor

Book IV. LEONIDAS. 147

Nor be the king offended, while I use  
The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly. 655

CONTEMPTUOUS smil'd the monarch, and re-  
sum'd.

Wilt thou, in Lacedæmon once supreme,  
Encounter twenty Persians ? Yet these Greeks  
In greater disproportion must engage  
Our host to-morrow. Demaratus then. 660

By single combat were the trial vain  
To shew the pow'r of well-united force,  
Which oft by military skill surmounts  
The weight of numbers. Prince, the diff'rence  
learn

Between thy warriors, and the sons of Greece. 665  
The flow'r, the safeguard of thy num'rous camp  
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round

H 2

Thy

Thy provinces. No fertile field demands  
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.  
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls. 670  
Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak  
By their laborious ax. Their watchful eyes  
Observe not, how the flocks and heifers feed.  
To them of wealth, of all possessions void,  
The name of country with an empty sound 675  
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,  
Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn  
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,  
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs  
Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt, 680  
From misery, debauchery and sloth  
Are these to battle drawn against a foe,  
Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,  
Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil, 684  
Wont through the freezing show'r, the wintry storm  
O'er

O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,  
 Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow  
 Beneath the burden of his yellow sheaves ;  
 Whence on himself, on her, whose faithful arms  
 Infold him joyful, on a growing race, 690  
 Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows  
 With independence. When to battle call'd,  
 For them his dearest comfort, and his care,  
 And for the harvest, promis'd to his toil,  
 He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force. 695  
 Such are the troops of ev'ry state in Greece.  
 One only yields a breed more warlike still,  
 Of whom selected bands appear in fight,  
 All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe  
 Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf. 700  
 They are devoted to severer tasks  
 For war alone, their sole delight and care.  
 From infancy to manhood they are train'd

To winter watches, to inclement skies,

To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky  
boar, 705

To arms and wounds ; a discipline of pain

So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp

With all its hardships is a seat of rest,

And war itself remission from their toil.

THY words are folly, with redoubled scorn 710

Returns the monarch. Doth not freedom dwell

Among the Spartans ? Therefore will they shun

Superior foes. The unrestrain'd and free

Will fly from danger ; while my vassals, born

To absolute controlment from their king, 715

Know, if th' allotted station they desert,

The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.

Book IV. LEONIDAS.

151

To this the exile: O conceive not, prince,  
That Spartans want an object, where to fix  
Their eyes in rev'rence, in obedient dread. 720  
To them more awful, than the name of king  
To Asia's trembling millions, is the law;  
Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront  
Unnumber'd foes, to vanquish, or to die.

HERE Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts. 725  
Its long defile Thermopylæ presents.  
The satraps leave their cars. On foot they form.  
A splendid orb around their lord. By chance  
The Spartans then compos'd th' external guard.  
They, in a martial exercise employ'd, 730  
Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train;  
But poise the spear, protended, as in fight;  
Or lift their adverse shields in single strife;  
Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel



In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet : 735  
While others calm beneath their polish'd helms  
Draw down their hair, whose length of fable curls  
O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here  
The exile questions. What do these intend,  
Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair ? 740

To whom the Spartan. O imperial lord,  
Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,  
When full determin'd to encounter death.  
Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel ;  
Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man, 745  
All, who possess the regions unexplor'd  
Beyond the Ganges, all, whose wand'ring steps  
Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild  
With those, who drink the secret fount of Nile :  
Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay 750  
Remain a stranger. Fervour from his lips

The

Thus breaks aloud ; when, gushing from his eyes,  
Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside  
His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.  
The keen remembrance of his former state, 755  
His dignity, his greatness, and the sight  
Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,  
And spread amazement through the world in arms,  
Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks  
Review the godlike warriors, who beneath 760  
His standard once victorious fought, who call'd  
Him once their king, their leader ; then again,  
O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears  
His rev'rend beard, in agony bemoans  
His faded honors, his illustrious name, 765  
Forgotten long, his majesty defil'd  
By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd  
By fordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,  
Some princely palace, or stupendous fane

Magnificent in ruin nods ; where time        770  
From under shelving architraves hath mow'd  
The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd  
Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own  
He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane. 775

O DEMARATUS, in this grief I see,  
How just thy praises of Laconia's state.  
Though cherish'd here with universal love,  
Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,  
How'er averse to thine. But swift relief        780  
From indignation borrow. Call to mind  
Thy injuries. Th' auspicious fortune blest,  
Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,  
To peace, to honor in the Persian court.

As

Book IV. L E O N I D A S. 155

As Demaratus with a grateful mind . . . 785

His answer was preparing, Persia's king  
Stern interrupted. Soon as morning shines,  
Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head  
The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians  
bound.

THIS said, the monarch to his camp returns. 790  
Th' attendant princes reascend their cars,  
Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen  
Detain'd, who thus began. Impartial, brave,  
Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart  
To thee its feelings undisguis'd reveal. 795  
Thou hear'st thy royal brother. He demands  
These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate  
there ?

Why not command the mountains to remove,  
Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,

Their

Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die 800  
My gratitude instructs me in the cause  
Of our imperial master. To succeed  
Is not within the shadow of my hopes  
At this dire pass. What evil genius sways ?  
Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest 805  
In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd  
My dictates, oft repeated in despight  
Of purpled flatt'ers, to embark a force,  
Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine  
These sons of valour to their own defence. 810  
Vain are my words. The royal ear admits  
Their sound alone ; while adulation's notes  
In Siren sweetness penetrate his heart,  
There lodge ensnaring mischief. In a figh  
To her the prince. O faithful to thy lord, 815  
Discreet adviser, and in action firm,  
What can I answer ? My afflicted soul

Must

must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.  
 Thou mayst be partial to thy Doric race,  
 ayst magnify our danger. Let me hope, 820  
 hate'er the danger, if extreme, believe,  
 that Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed  
 not with less zeal, than Spartans for their laws.

THEY separate. To Xerxes he repairs.  
 The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard, 825  
 says and retraces with sagacious ken  
 the destin'd field of war, the vary'd space,  
 depth, its confines both of hill and sea.  
 Can time a scene more splendid hath allur'd  
 or son's attention. His transported sight 830  
 with ecstacy like worship long pursues  
 the pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,  
 which shew'd their idol to the nations round,  
 the bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,

The



Those, who have tempted their imperial lord  
 To that prepos't'rous arrogance, which cast  
 Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,  
 Chastis'd with stripes in heav'n's offended sight 855  
 The Hellespont, and fondly now demands  
 The Spartans bound. O child, my soul's delight,  
 Train'd by my care to equitable sway,  
 And imitation of the gods by deeds  
 To merit their protection, heed my voice. 860  
 They, who alone can tame, or swell the floods,  
 Compose the winds, or guide their strong career,  
 O'erwhelming human greatness, will confound  
 Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet  
 Their indignation hath already fall'n. 865  
 Perhaps our boasted army is prepar'd  
 A prey, for death to vindicate their pow'r.



THIS said, a curious search in ev'ry part  
Her eye renews. Adjoining to the streights,  
Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining shrubs, 870  
A seeming fence to some sequester'd ground,  
By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards  
Address'd their spears to part the pliant boughs.  
Held back, they yield a passage to the queen,  
And princely boy. Delicious to their sight 875  
Soft dales, meand'ring, shew their flow'ry laps  
Among rude piles of nature. In their sides  
Of rock are mansions hewn ; nor loaden trees  
Of cluster'd fruit are wanting : But no sound,  
Except of brooks in murmur, and the song 880  
Of winged warblers, meets the list'ning ear.  
No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form  
Is seen, no careful husband at his toil,  
Beside her threshold no industrious wife,  
No playful child. Instructive to her son 885  
The

The princess then. Already these abodes  
Are desolate. Once happy in their homes  
Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene  
Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars  
Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs, 890  
And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits  
Unripe ; will deafen with his clangour fell  
Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,  
Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,  
Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here. 895  
Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust  
To Demaratus ; while thy mother tries  
With these her martial followers, what sparks,  
Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame  
Their sons and daughters in a stern debate 900  
With other Dorians, who have never breath'd  
The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd  
In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.

Thou

Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks  
Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight 905  
Were too severe a lesson. Thou mightst bleed  
Among the thousands, fated to expire  
By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,  
Ye all-disposing rulers, but protect  
Her son.\* She ceas'd. The lionsess, who reigns 910  
Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,  
And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,  
Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.

Now slowly tow'ards the Persian camp her steps  
In silence she directed; when a voice, 915  
Sent from a rock, accessible which seem'd  
To none, but feather'd passengers of air,  
By this reproof detain'd her. Caria's queen  
Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd?  
Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste, 920  
Thou

**Book IV. LEONIDAS.** 163

Thou homager of tyrants ? Upward gaz'd  
Th' astonish'd princefs. Lo ! a female shape,  
Tall and majestic, from th' impendent ridge  
Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound  
Her graceful hair, loose flowing. Seldom wept 925  
Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear  
Between her eyelids gleam'd. Too true, she  
    figh'd,  
A homager of tyrants ! Voice austere,  
And preface half-divine ! Again the voice.

O ARTEMISIA, hide thy Doric sword. 930  
Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,  
Thy counfels, valiant as thou art and wife,  
Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,  
Subvert the laws of Greece, her sons enthrall.

THE queen made no reply. Her breast-plate  
heav'd. 935

The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail  
Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd,

OLYMPIAN thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill  
Of sacred oaths remind me ! Then aside  
She turns to shun that majesty of form, 940  
In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts  
She feels. A painful conflict she endures  
With recollection of her Doric race ;  
Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.  
Her royal benefactor she recalls, 945  
Back to his sight precipitates her steps.

END of the FOURTH BOOK.

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK the FIFTH.

### The Argument.

*Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence, which Agis and Melibæus bring from the upper pass, then commands a body of Arcadians with the Platæans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle under the conduct of Demophilus in that part of Thermopylæ, which lies close to the Phœcian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemissa had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repuls'd by Demophilus*

*mophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery, but pacified by Demaratus, is accompanied by him with a thousand horse to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulchre.*

**A**URORA dawn'd. Leonidas arose.  
 With Melibœus Agis, now return'd,  
 Address'd the king. Along the mountain's side  
 We bent our journey. On our way a voice  
 Loud from a crag on Melibœus call'd. 5  
 He look'd and answer'd, Mycon, ancient friend!  
 Far hast thou driv'n thy bearded train to day;  
 But fortunate thy presence. None like thee,  
 Inhabitant of Cæta from thy birth,

Can

Can furnish that intelligence, which Greece 10

Wants for her safety. Mycon shew'd a track.

We mounted high. The summit, where we stopp'd,

Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,

O'er dales and forests, rocks, and dashing floods

In cataracts. The object of our search 15

Beneath us lay, the secret pass to Greece,

Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.

We thence descended to the Phocian camp,

Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread

In height and shade; on whose sustaining boughs 20

Were hung in snowy folds a thousand tents,

Containing each a Phocian heavy-mail'd

With twolight-weapon'd menials. Northward ends

The vale, contracted to that narrow streight,

Which first we saw with Mycon. Prudent care 25

Like yours alleviates mine, well-pleas'd the king

Reply'd. Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands



Select a thousand spears. To them unite  
The Thespians and Platæans. Draw their lines  
Beneath the wall, which fortifies the pass. 30  
There, close-embod'y'd, will their might repulse  
The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.  
Approv'd in martial service him I name  
The chief supreme. Obedient to his will  
Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents, 35  
Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.  
So round their monarch in his stormy hall  
The winds assemble. From his dusky throne  
His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims  
To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds de-  
form, 40  
Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.  
Lacænia's leader from the rampart's height  
To battle thus the list'ning host inflames.

THIS

Book V. LEONIDAS. 169

THIS day, O Grecians, countrymen and friends,  
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats, 45  
Your parents, country, liberty and laws  
Demand your swords. You gen'rous, active, brave,  
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,  
Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,  
In war unskilful, nature's basest dross, 50  
And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.  
Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd  
By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause,  
Their only fruit of victory is spoil.  
They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares. 55  
Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,  
Who fill her boasted numbers, are a croud,  
Forc'd from their homes ; a populace in peace  
By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war  
Their tyrant's victims, Taught in passive grief 60  
To bear the rapine, cruelty and spurns

Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine  
In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds  
The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.  
Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance 65  
Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present  
The mockery of war----But ev'ry eye  
Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts  
Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.  
Go then, ye sons of liberty; go, sweep 70  
These bondmen from the field. Resistless rend  
The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.  
Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,  
The warrior's helm profaning. Think, the shades  
Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows 75  
Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.

HE spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.  
In fierce reply Barbarian shouts ascend

From

From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.  
Such is the roar of Ætna, when his mouth 80  
Displodes combustion from his sulph'rous depths  
To blast the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood  
In deep array before the Phocian wall  
The phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,  
And spears protended, like the graceful range 85  
Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs  
Before some rural palace wide expand  
Their venerable umbrage to retard  
The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main  
In lucid rows the rising waves reflect 90  
The sun's effulgence ; so the Grecian helms  
Return'd his light, which o'er their convex post'd  
A splendour, scatter'd through the dancing plumes  
Down rush the foes. Exulting in their van,  
Their haughty leader shakes his threat'ning lance, 95

Provoking battle. Instant from his rank.  
 Diomedon bursts furious. On he strides,  
 Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies.

Now art thou met, Barbarian. Wouldst thou prove  
 Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command 100  
 Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.

TIGRANES, turning to the Persians, spake.  
 My friends and foldiers, check your martial haste,  
 While my strong lance that Grecian's pride con-  
 founds.

HE ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon 105  
 Each combatant advanc'd: Their sinewy hands  
 Grip'd fast their spears, high-brandish'd. Thrice  
 they drove  
 With well-directed force the pointed steel

At

Book V. LEONIDAS. 173

Ateither's throat, and thrice their wary shields  
Repell'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief 110  
At length, with pow'rs collected for the stroke,  
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.  
Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns  
Approaching fate ; then all his martial skill  
Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear 115  
Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths.  
The blade, descending on Tigranes' arm,  
That instant struggling to redeem his lance,  
The nervous hand dissevers. Pale affright  
Unmans the Persian ; while his active foe 120  
Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,  
Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.  
Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.  
His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides ;  
Then in a tuft of blood-distilling hair 125  
His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk

The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength  
Among the adverse legions. All in dread  
Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew  
In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track 130  
Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,  
A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn  
Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high  
A meteor, waving its portentous fires ;  
Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams, 135  
Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,  
Dispersing plague and desolation round.  
Awhile the stern Diomedon remain'd  
Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze  
The heart of Persia ; then with haughty pace 140  
In fullen joy among his gladsome friends  
Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng  
In consternation motionless suspend  
The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms.

HEA-

Book V.    L E O N I D A S.                    175

HEAV'N! can one leader's fate appal this host, 145  
Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?  
Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge  
I draw my subject files. My hardy toil  
Through pathless woods and deserts hath ex-  
plor'd  
The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand 150  
Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.  
So through this field of slaughter will I chace  
Yon vaunting Greek. His ardent words revive  
Declining valour in the van. His lance  
Then in the rear he brandishes. The croud 155  
Before his threat'ning ire, affrighted, roll  
Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.  
Thus with his trident ocean's angry god  
From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass  
Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach. 160



TREMENDOUS frown'd the fierce Platæan chief  
Full in the battle's front. His ample shield  
Like a strong bulwark prominent he rais'd  
Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm  
Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train 165  
In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.

Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,  
Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,  
Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon  
Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest 170  
The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host

Shrunk back, as blasted by the piercing beams  
Of that unconquerable sword, which fell  
With light'ning's swiftnefs on dissever'd helms,  
And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all, 175  
Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,  
Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd  
With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends.

O Di-

**Book V. LEONIDAS.****177**

O DITHYRAMBUS, let thy deeds this day  
Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms, 180  
Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal.  
Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.  
Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame  
Smiles on thy years. She grants thy aged hand  
To pluck fresh laurels for thy honor'd brow. 185

As, when endu'd with Promethæan heat,  
The molten clay respir'd ; a sudden warmth  
Glow in the venerable Thespian's veins ;  
In ev'ry sinew new-born vigour swells.  
His falchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm; 190  
The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war  
Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates  
He proud in hope her swarming numbers led.  
Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,  
His martial brothers. They attend his fate, 195

By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary fire  
Shall o'er his solitary palace roam ;  
Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse  
Ambition's fury, and the lust of war,  
Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave. 200

NEXT by the fierce Platæan's fatal sword  
Expir'd Damates, once the host and friend  
Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight  
He left his native bands. Of Syrian birth  
In Daphné he resided near the grove, 205  
Whose hospitable laurels in their shade  
Conceal'd the virgin fugitive averse  
To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd  
Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,  
Herself a laurel chang'd her golden hair 210  
To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove  
Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,  
Fann'd

Book V. LEONIDAS.

179

Fann'd by the breath of Zephyrs, and with rills  
From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast,  
The happy rival of Theffalia's vale, 215  
Now hid forever from Damates' eyes.

DEMOPHILUS, wife leader, soon improves  
Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,  
In age his equals, to condense the files,  
To rivet close their bucklers he commands. 220  
As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,  
But well-compacted, when a fav'ring gale  
Invites the skilful master to expand  
The sails at large, her slow but steady course  
Impels through myriads of dividing waves ; 225  
So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs  
The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons  
Pursu'd more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd  
The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,  
Crush'd

Crush'd like vile stubble underneath the steps 230  
Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields  
Of new-shorn harvest. On the gen'ral rout  
Phraortes look'd intrepid still. He sprang  
O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.  
His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd, 235

FLY then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.  
Yet single here my target shall oppose  
The shock of thousands. Raging, he impels  
His deathful point through Aristander's breast.  
Him Dithyrambus lov'd. A sacred bard, 240  
Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd,  
He sung the deeds of heroes, those, who fell,  
Or those, who conquer'd in their country's cause,  
Th' enraptur'd soul inspiring with the love  
Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high strain 245  
The Muses favor'd from their neighb'ring bow'rs,  
And

nd blest'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.

o more from Thespia shall his feet ascend

he shady steep of Helicon ; no more

he stream divine of Aganippe's fount

250

adew his lip harmonious : nor his hands,

Which, dying, grasp the unforfaken lance,

nd prostrate buckler, ever more accord

is lofty numbers to the sounding shell.

o ! Dithyrambus weeps. Amid the rage

255

f war and conquest swiftly-gushing tears

ind one sad moment's interval to fall

n his pale friend. But soon the victor proves

is stern revenge. Through shield and corselet

plung'd,

is forceful blade divides the Persian's chest ;

260

Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd

rom ancestors, who sway'd in Ninus old

'h' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne

A tributary satrap rul'd the vales,  
 Where Tigris swift between the parted hills 265  
 Of tall Niphates drew his foamy tide,  
 Impregnating the meads. Phraortes sinks,  
 Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes  
 Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.

BEYOND the Malian entrance of the freights 270  
 Th' Arcadians rush ; when, unperceiv'd, till felt,  
 Spring from concealment in a thicket deep  
 New swarms of warriors, clustring on the flank  
 Of these unwary Grecians. Tow'rd's the bay  
 They shrink. They totter on the fearful edge, 275  
 Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,  
 The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk  
 Beneath the chieftain of th' affailing band  
 Falls prostrate. Thespians and Platæans wave  
 Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes, 280  
 Refem-

Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.

Dire is the flock. What less, than Caria's queen

In their career of victory could check

Such warriors? Fierce the struggles; while the

rout

Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp 285

Contagious terror: thence no succour flows.

Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band

At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit

He leaves to others, like th' almighty fire,

Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods, 290

His instruments of wrath, o'erwhelm the earth,

And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth

Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding croud

Platæa's chief and Dithyrambus range

Triumphant side by side. Thus o'er the field, 295

Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,

And concave hoof along his echoing banks,

Two



Two gen'rous courfers, link'd in mutual reins,  
In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust  
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal. 300  
Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,  
They prefs the Carian rear. Not long the queen  
Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans  
Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs  
She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs: 305  
A troop she rallies. Goddess-like she turns,  
Not less, than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.  
Whole ranks she covers like th' imperial bird  
Extending o'er a nest of callow young  
Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak, 310  
Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent  
hand,  
From common lives refraining, hastes to snatch  
More splendid laurels from that nobler head.  
His pond'rous falchion, swift descending, bears  
Her

Book V. LEONIDAS. 185

Her buckler down, thence glancing, cuts the  
thong, 315

Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence  
Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose  
A female warrior ; one, whose summer pride  
Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,

Yet by th' heroic character supply'd, 320

Which grew more awful, as the touch of time  
Remov'd the soft'ning graces. Back he steps,  
Unmann'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,  
Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands  
Full on his crest discharge the furious blade. 325  
The forceful blow compels him to recede

Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd,  
His soldiers flock around him. From a scene  
Of blood more distant speeds Plataea's chief.

The fair occasion of suspended fight 330

She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,

And

And faves her Carian remnant. While his friend  
In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake.

If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.  
Be all thy trophies, be my own accurs'd. 335

THE youth, recover'd, answers in a smile.  
I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd  
The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.  
Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.  
Let us prevent his call. This said, their steps 340  
They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps  
Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore  
Distain'd like two grim tigers, who have forc'd  
A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd  
By some lone-wand'ring traveller, then, dy'd 345  
In human crimson, through the forest deep  
Back to their covert's dreery gloom retire.

Stern

STERN Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,  
Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look  
She casts around. Abrocomes remote 350  
With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.  
She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,  
Who from battalions numberless had spar'd  
Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd  
With her distress. Her anger now augments. 355  
Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow.  
He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat  
High on his car. She follows. Lest her  
helm,  
Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,  
Wild, but majestic like the waving boughs 360  
Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,  
And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield  
With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen  
All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds

Her

Her bleeding foldiers. Brandishing her sword, 365  
To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks.

BEHOLD these mangled Carians, who have spent  
Their vital current in the king's defence,  
Ev'n in his fight; while Medes and Cissians fled,  
By these protected, whom Argestes saw 370  
Pursu'd by slaughter to thy very camp,  
Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling fire,  
Let Hormanes be thy name, or Jove,  
To thee appealing, of the king I claim  
A day for justice. Monarch, to my arm 375  
Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth  
Chastise his treason. With an eye submissive,  
A meek obsequious, and a soothing tone  
To cheat the king, to moderate her ire  
Argestes utters these fallacious words. 380

MAY Horomazes leave the fiend at large  
 To blast my earthly happiness, confine  
 Amid the horrors of his own abode  
 My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge  
 Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint,    385  
 My sole restraint ! To him our all is due  
 Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd.  
 His preservation I prefer to fame,  
 And bright occasion for immortal deeds  
 Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword,    390  
 Fair heroine of Asia, hadst thou seen  
 Among the foremost blazing. Lo ! the king  
 A royal present will on thee bestow,  
 Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,  
 A golden wreath to each survivor brave.    395

Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatt'ers spell  
 Deluded, languid through dismay and shame

At his defeat, the monarch for a time  
 Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips.

THOU hear'st, great princeſs. Reſt content.

His words 400

I ratify. Yet farther, I proclaim  
 Thee of my train firſt counſellor and chief.

O EAGLE-EY'D diſcernment in the king !  
 O wiſdom equal to his boundleſs power !  
 The purpled ſycophant exclaims. (Thou ſeeſt 405  
 Her matchleſs talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,  
 The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,  
 Foil'd in her abſence, in her conduct ſafe.  
 Thy penetrating fight directs the field ;  
 There let her worth be hazarded no more. 410

I

THY

THY words are wise, the blinded prince rejoins,  
Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.

THUS to remove her from the royal ear  
Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage  
Swells in her bosom. Demaratus sees 415  
And calms the storm by rend'ring up his charge  
To her maternal hand. Her son belov'd  
Dispels the furies. Then the Spartan thus.

O ARTEMISIA, of the king's command  
Be thou observant. To thy slaughter'd friends 420  
Immediate care, far other, than revenge,  
Is due. The ravens gather. From his nest  
Among those cliffs the eagle's rapid flight  
Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek,  
Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead. 425  
Depart; thy guide is piety. Collect,

For



For honorable sepulchers prepare  
Those bodies, mark'd with honorable wounds.  
I will assist thee. Xerxes will entrust  
To my command a chosen guard of horse. 430

As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercaft  
The night with double darknefs, only pierc'd  
By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,  
The orient fun, diffufing genial warmth,  
Refines the troubled air; the blast is mute; 435  
Death-pointed flames difperfe; and placid Jove  
Looks down in fmiles: fo prudence from the lips  
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,  
His afpect strength'ning fmooth perfuafion's flow,  
Compos'd her fpirit. She with him departs. 440  
The king affigns a thoufand horse to guard  
Th' illustrious exile, and heroic dame.

END of the FIFTH BOOK.

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK the SIXTH.

### The Argument.

*The Grecian commanders after the pursuit retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of mount Oeta. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave: while Dithyrambus, discovering a passage through it, ascends to the temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Melissa, the daughter of Oileus, she entrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deposes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces, first engag'd, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted on their own request to continue in the field with the Plataeans. By the advice of Diomedon the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylae, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Plataeans, Mantineans, Tegæans, Thebans,*

*bans, Corinthians, Phlians and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light arm'd troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the son of Oileus. Dienees commands the whole.*

**N**OW Dythyrambus and Platæa's chief,  
 Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd  
 Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield  
 Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their fight.  
 To him in pity Thespia's gallant youth       5  
 Approaching, thus his gen'rous soul express'd.

LIV'ST thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,  
 From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows  
 Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic'd,  
 When fortune blest'd with victory my arm,       10  
 Than now to raise thee from this field of death.

HIS

Book VI. LEONIDAS. 195

His languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,  
Then with expiring voice. Vain man, forbear  
To proffer me, what soon thyself must crave.  
The day is quite extinguish'd in these orbs. 15  
One moment fate allows me to disdain  
Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.

This effort made, the haughty spirit fled.  
So shoots a meteor's transitory gleam  
Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds, 20  
Then dissipates forever. O'er the corse  
His rev'rend face Demophilus inclin'd,  
Pois'd on his lance, and thus address'd the slain.

ALAS ! how glorious were that bleeding breast,  
Had justice brac'd the buckler on thy arm, 25  
And to preserve a people bade thee die.  
Who now shall mourn thee ! Thy ungrateful king

Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land  
May raise an empty monument, but feel  
No public sorrow. Thy recorded name 30  
Shall wake among thy countrymen no fights  
For their lost hero. What to them avail'd  
Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard  
Their wives, their offspring from th' oppressor's  
hand ;

But to extend oppression didst thou fall, 35  
Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy soul,  
Which, but thy froward destiny forbade,  
By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.  
All-bounteous nature, thy impartial laws  
To no selected race of men confine 40  
The sense of glory, fortitude, and all  
The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,  
And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st  
In ev'ry soil. But freedom like the sun

Must

Book VI. LEONIDAS. 197

Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone 45  
They bloom, they flourish ; while oppression blasts  
The tender virtues : hence a spurious growth,  
False honor, savage valour taint the soul,  
And wild ambition : hence rapacious pow'r  
The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave, 50  
A feast for dogs, th' ensanguin'd field bestrew.

HE said. Around the venerable man  
The warriors throng'd attentive. Conquest hush'd  
Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,  
Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm. 55  
So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew  
To 'Hebrus' margin from their dreery seats  
The savage breed, which Hæmus, wrapp'd in  
clouds,  
Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean snows  
In blood and discord nurs'd, the soothing strain 60

Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,  
Their fierceness melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd  
The sacred laws of justice, which the bard  
Mix'd with the music of his heav'nly string.

MEAN time th' Arcadians with inverted  
arms 65

And banners, sad and solemn on their shields  
The giant limbs of Clonius bore along  
To spread a gen'ral woe. The noble corse,  
Dire spectacle of carnage, passing by  
To those last honors, which the dead partake, 70  
Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye  
Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine ;  
Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd  
Intent, and spake. My heart retains thy words.  
This hour may witness, how rapacious pow'r 75  
The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.

But

But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire  
A signal tomb. This gallant Persian, crush'd  
Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood still warm,  
May lie forgotten by his thankless king ; 80  
Yet not by me neglected shall remain  
A naked corse. The good old man replies.

My gen'rous child, deserving that success,  
Thy arm hath gain'd ! When vital breath is fled,  
Our friends, our foes are equal dust. Both claim 85  
The fun'ral passage to that future seat  
Of being, where no enmity revives.  
There Greek and Persian will together quaff  
In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of bliss  
Immortal. Him, thy valour slew on earth, 90  
In that bless'd region thou mayst find a friend.



THIS said, the ready Thespians he commands  
To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,  
Th'empurpled rock. Outstretch'd on targets broad,  
Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane, 95  
He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A CAVE not distant from the Phocian wall  
Through Cæta's cloven side had nature form'd  
In spacious windings. This in moss she clad ;  
O'er half the entrance downward from the roots 100  
She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,  
To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth  
Relucent laurels spread before the sun  
A broad and vivid foliage. High above,  
The hill was darken'd by a solemn shade, 105  
Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave  
Diomedon, Demophilus resort,  
And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,  
Cool,

Cool, as the azure grot, where Thetis sleeps  
Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds 110  
Of waters, trilling from the riven stone  
To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,  
In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,  
Allure the warriors hot with toil and thirst  
To this retreat serene. Against the fides 115  
Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields ;  
The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks ;  
Propp'd on their spears, they rest : when Agis  
brings  
From Lacedæmon's leader these commands.

LEONIDAS recalls you from your toils, 120  
Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd  
The first bright harvest on the field of fame.  
Our eyes in wonder from the Phocian wall  
On your unequall'd deeds incessant gaz'd.

To whom Platæa's chief. Go, Agis, say 125  
To Lacedæmon's ruler, that, untir'd,  
Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,  
Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.  
Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,  
Shall not this early sun again behold 130  
The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,  
Sould they adventure on a fresh assault?

To him the Thespian youth. My friend, my  
guide

To noble actions, since thy gen'rous heart  
Intent on fame disdains to rest, O grant, 135  
I too thy glorious labours may partake,  
May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.  
Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king entreat  
Not to command us from the field of war.

YES,

Book VI. LEONIDAS. 203

YES, persevering heroes, he reply'd, 140  
I will return, will Sparta's king entreat  
Not to command you from the field of war.

THEN interpos'd Demophilus. O friend,  
Who leadst to conquest brave Plataea's sons ;  
Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man, 145  
Who dost restore a brother to my eyes ;  
My soul your magnanimity applauds :  
But, O reflect, that unabating toil  
Subdues the mightiest. Valour will repine,  
When the weak hand obeys the heart no more. 150  
Yet I, declining through the weight of years,  
Will not assign a measure to your strength.  
If still you find your vigour undecay'd,  
Stay and augment your glory. So, when time  
Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside ; 155  
When in the temples your enfeebled arms  
Have

Have hung their consecrated shields, the land,  
Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,  
Shall then by honors, doubled on your age,  
Bequite the gen'rous labours of your prime. 160

So spake the senior, and forfook the cave.  
But from the fount Diomedon receives  
Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,  
Addressing thus the genius of the stream.

WHOE'ER thou art, divinity unstain'd 165  
Of this fair fountain, till unsparing Mars  
Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy  
streams

To me, who ill repay thee. I again  
Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,  
Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Malian  
slime. 170

He

HE said, and lifted in his brimming casque  
The bright, refreshing moisture. Thus repairs  
The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,  
Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood  
Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp 175  
Had roam'd, unheeding, in the secret shade;  
Rapacious o'er the humid brink he stoops,  
And in the pure and fluid crystal cools  
His reeking jaws. Mean time the Thespian's eye  
Roves round the vaulted space; when sudden  
founds 180  
Of music, utter'd by melodious harps,  
And melting voices, distant, but in tones  
By distance soften'd, while the ecchoes sigh'd  
In lulling replication, fill the vault  
With harmony. In admiration mute, 185  
With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,  
Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes

The

The balm of sleep relaxes, and his wings  
Fall from his languid side. Plataea's chief,  
Observing, rous'd the warrior. Son of Mars, 190  
Shall music's softness from thy bosom steal  
The sense of glory ? From his neighb'ring camp  
Perhaps the Persian sends fresh nations down.  
Soon in bright steel Thermopylae will blaze.  
Awake. Accustom'd to the clang of arms, 195  
Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,  
My ear, my spirit in this hour admit  
No new sensation, nor a change of thought.

THE Thespian, starting from oblivious sloth  
Of ravishment and wonder, quick reply'd. 200

THESE sounds were more, than human. Hark !  
Again !

O honor'd friend, no adverse banner streams

In

Book VI. L E O N I D A S. 207

In fight. No shout proclaims the Persian freed  
From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge  
In this mysterious dwelling of the nymphs, 205  
Whose voices charm its gloom. In smiles rejoin'd  
Diomedon. I see thy soul enthrall'd.

Me thou wouldst rank among th' unletter'd rout  
Of yon Barbarians, should I press thy stay.

Time favors too. Till Agis be return'd, 210

We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.

Here will I wait, a centinel unmov'd,

To watch thy coming. In exploring haste

Th' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.

He finds it bounded by a steep ascent 215

Of rugged steps ; where down the hollow rock

A modulation clear, distinct and slow

In movement solemn from a lyric string,

Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord

With these sonorous lays. Celestial maids ! 220

While,



While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,  
We celebrate our heroes, O impart  
Orphēan magic to the pious strain !  
That from the mountain we may call the groves,  
Swift motion through these marble fragments  
breathe

225

To overleap the high Ætæan ridge,  
And crush the fell invaders of our peace.

THE animated hero upward springs  
Light, as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd  
In subterranean cavities, at length 230  
Pervading, rives the surface to enlarge  
The long-imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,  
He sees, he stands abash'd, then rev'rent kneels.

AN aged temple with insculptur'd forms  
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train 235  
Of

Of

Of nine bright virgins, round their priestess rang'd,  
Who stood in awful majesty, receive  
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.  
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord  
In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage, 240  
Whose elevated port and aspect rose  
To more, than mortal dignity, her lyre  
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,  
Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair  
Shades his inclining forehead ; while a flush 245  
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.  
Her pensive visage softens to a smile  
On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts.

I SHOULD reprove thee, inadvertent youth,  
Who through the sole access, by nature left 250  
To this pure mansion, with intruding steps  
Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword  
Perhaps

Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene,  
Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.  
What is the impress on thy warlike shield ? 255

A GOLDEN eagle on my shield I bear,  
Still bending low, he answers. She pursues.

ART thou possessor of that glorious orb,  
By me distinguish'd in the late defeat  
Of Asia, driv'n before thee ? Speak thy name. 260  
Who is thy fire ? Where lies thy native seat ?  
Com'ft thou for glory to this fatal spot,  
Or from Barbarian violence to guard  
A parent's age, a spouse, and tender babes,  
Who call thee father ? Humbly he again. 265

I AM of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,  
The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,

He

He to his brother, and my second fire,  
Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons  
By him are led. His dictates I obey, 270  
Him to resemble strive. No infant voice  
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow  
I am a stranger, and among the Greeks  
The least entitled to thy partial praise.

NONE more entitled, interpos'd the dame. 275  
Deserving hero! thy demeanour speaks,  
It justifies the fame, so widely spread,  
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride  
Of that fair city, which the Muses love,  
Thee an accepted visitant I hail 280  
In this their ancient temple. Thou shalt view  
Their sacred haunts. Descending from the dome,  
She thus pursues. First know, my youthful hours  
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muse  
To

To daily meditation won my soul, 285

With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks

Of her own rapture. By a father sage

Conducted, cities, manners, men I saw,

Their institutes and customs. I return'd.

The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain 290

The holy function here. Now throw thy sight

Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades

Wave in the breeze, and glitten in the sun

Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train

Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty, spar'd 295

From this surrounding wilderness. Remark

That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flow'rs,

Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs, by Iris dress'd.

Nor pass that smiling concave in the hill,

Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight 300

By figs and grapes. She pauses; while around

His eye, delighted, roves, in more delight

Soon

Book VI. LEONIDAS.

213

Soon to the spot returning, where she stood

A deity in semblance, o'er the place

Prefiding awful, as Minerva wife, 305

August like Juno, like Diana pure,

But not more pure, than fair. The beauteous lake,

The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,

The multifarious glow on Flora's lap

Loſe all attraction, as her gracious lips 310

Reſume their tale. In ſolitude remote

Here I have dwelt contemplative, ſerene.

Oft through the rocks reſponſive to my lyre,

Oft to th' Amphictyons in aſſembly full,

When at this ſhrine their annual vows they  
pay, 315

In meaſur'd declamation I repeat

The praiſe of Greece, her liberty and laws.

From me the hinds, who tend their wand'ring goats

In theſe rude purlicus, modulate their pipes

To smother cadence. Justice from my tongue 320  
Diffentions calms, which ev'n in deserts rend  
Th' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war  
My careful thoughts engages, which delight  
To help the free, th' oppressor to confound.  
Thy feet auspicious fortune hither brings. 325  
In thee a noble messenger I find.

Go, in these words Leonidas address.

“ Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,  
“ By their behests invites thy honor'd feet  
“ To her divine abode. Thee, first of Greeks, 330  
“ To conference of high import she calls.”

TH' obedient Thespian down the holy cave  
Returns. His swiftness suddenly prevents  
His friend's impatience, who salutes him thus.

LET

Book VI. LEONIDAS. 215

LET thy adventure be hereafter told. 335  
Look yonder. Fresh battalions from the camp  
File through the Phocian barrier to construct  
Another phalanx, moving tow'r of war,  
Which scorns the strength of Asia. Let us arm ;  
That, ready station'd in the glorious van, 340  
We may secure permission from the king  
There to continue, and renew the fight.

THAT instant brings Megistias near the grot.  
To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand  
Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard 345  
By Dithyrambus in their slow approach,  
The father warns a young and lib'ral mind.

SPRUNG from a distant boundary of Greece,  
A foreigner in Sparta, cherish'd there,  
Instructed, honor'd, nor unworthy held 350



To fight for Lacedæmon in her line  
Of discipline and valour, lo ! my son,  
The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart :  
That in thy hand, not ill-entrusted, shine  
The spear and buckler to maintain the cause 355  
Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recal  
Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,  
He overlooks the battle ; he discerns  
The bold and fearful. May the gods, I serve,  
Grant me to hear Leonidas approve 360  
My son ! No other boon my age implores.

THE augur paus'd. The animated cheek  
Of Menalippus glows. His eager look  
Demands the fight. This struck the tender fire,  
Who then with moisten'd eyes. Remember too, 365  
A father sees thy danger. Oh ! my child,  
To me thy honor, as to thee, is dear ;

Yet

Book VI. LEONIDAS.

217

Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,

By all my fondness, all my cares I sue !

Amid the conflict, or the warm pursuit 370

Still by the wife Dieneces abide.

His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths

Of glory. He admits thee to his side.

He will direct thy ardour. Go----They part.

MEGISTIAS, turning, is accosted thus 375

By Dithyrambus. Venerable seer,

So may that son, whose merit I esteem,

Whose precious head in peril I would die

To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,

As thou deliver'ft to Laconia's king 380

A high and solemn message. While anew

The line is forming, from th' embattled field

I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge

Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.

VOL. I.

L

THE

THE Acarnanian in suspense remains 385  
And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates  
Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,  
Then quits th' instructed augur, and attends  
Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief  
Was reassuming his distinguish'd arms, 390  
Which, as a splendid recompense, he bore  
From grateful Athens, for achievements bold;  
When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd  
Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm  
Inclos'd his manly temples. From on high 395  
A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath  
A golden dragon with effulgent scales,  
Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm  
He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,  
Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form 400  
Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.  
Low, as her feet, the graceful tunic flow'd.

Betwixt two gryffins on her helmet sat

A sphynx with wings expanded ; while the face  
Of dire Medusa on her breastplate frown'd. 405

One hand supports a javelin, which confounds  
The pride of kings. The other leads along

A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow

A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents ;

But from her shoulders all her plumes were  
shorn, 410

In favor'd Athens ever now to rest.

This dread of Asia on his mighty arm

Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,

Then spake to Dithyrambus. See, my friend,

Alone of all the Grecians, who sustain'd 415

The former onset, inexhausted stand

Plataea's sons. They well may keep the field,

Who with unflaken'd nerves endur'd that day,

Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n

Back to their ships, and Athens left secure. 420  
Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank  
Thy valour shall be plac'd to share command,  
And ev'ry honor with Platæa's chief.

HE said no more, but tow'rd's the Grecian van  
Impetuous, ardent strode. Nor slow behind 425  
The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd  
Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms ;  
When lightly graceful with his feather'd feet  
Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd  
To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece 430  
Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste  
Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,  
Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts.

NOR to contend, but vanquish are ye come.  
Here in the blood of fugitives your spears 435  
Shall,

Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,  
 But chief, ye men of-Sparta, view that space,  
 Where from the Malian gulph more distant rise  
 Th' Ætæan rocks, and less confine the streights.  
 There if we range, extending wide our front, 440  
 An ampler scope to havoc will be giv'n.

To him Dieneces. Platæan friend,  
 Well dost thou counsel. On that widening ground  
 Close to the mountain place thy vet'ran files.  
 Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall  
 stretch 445

Quite to the shore in phalanx deep like thine.  
 The Spartans wedg'd in this contracted part  
 Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits  
 With lighter bodies. Further back the line  
 Of Locris forms a strong reserve. He said. 450  
 The diff'rent bands, confiding in his skill,

Move on successive. The Platæans first  
Against the hill are station'd. In their van  
Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy  
Distends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes. 455

BLESS'D be the great Diomedon, they shout,  
Who brings another hero to our line.  
Hail ! Dithyrambus. Hail ! illustrious youth.  
Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd  
An early palm at Marathon. His post 460  
He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek  
Amid the foremost rank. Around him croud  
The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd scars  
Discov'ring, they in ample phrase recount  
Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys 465  
In veneration, nor disdains to hear  
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king  
Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd.

LEONI-

LEONIDAS salutes Platæa's chief

And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants 470

A further effort with Platæa's band,

If yet by toil unconquer'd----but I see,

That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.

Hail ! glorious veterans. This signal day

May your victorious arms augment the wreaths 475

Around your venerable heads, and grace

Thermopylæ with Marathonian fame.

THIS said, he hastens back. Mean time advance

The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,

Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief, 480

Who near Diomedon in equal range

Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.

Alcmæon, bold Eupalamus succeed

With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.

Last on the Malian shore Mycenæ's youth 485

Aristo-



Aristobulus draws. From Œta's side  
 Down to the bay in well-connected length  
 Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears;  
 While twenty bucklers ev'ry file condense.  
 A sure support; Dienece behind 490  
 Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,  
 There Menalippus by their leader stand  
 Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,  
 The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame  
 Of expectation through his light-arm'd force; 495  
 While Polydorus present in his thoughts  
 To vengeance sharpens his indignant fowl.

No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.  
 This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.  
 The solemn scene on Œta to his friend 500  
 He open'd large; portray'd Meliffa's form,  
 Reveal'd her mandate; when Platæa's chief.

SUCH

SUCH elevation of a female mind  
Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain  
The conference, she asks. This wond'rous dame 505  
Amid her hymns conceives some lofty thought  
To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,  
Dread ev'n our women. But, my gentle friend,  
Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell  
Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods, 510  
Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r ?  
Or should I thank them, that the soft'ning charm  
Of sound, or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul ?  
Yet I confess, thy valour breaks that charm,  
Which may enrapture, not unman thy breast. 515

To whom his friend. Doth he, whose lays record  
The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,  
Doth he dissolve thy spirit ? Yet he flows  
In all the sweetness, harmony can breathe.

No

No by the gods, Diomedon rejoins. 520  
I feel that mighty muse. I see the car  
Of fierce Achilles, see th' encumber'd wheels  
O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.  
Another too demands my soul's esteem,  
Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen 525  
His muse begirt by Furies, while she swell'd  
Her tragic numbers. Him in equal rage  
His country's foes e'erwhelming I beheld  
At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuse  
Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band 530  
Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.  
But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye  
To yonder point, remotest in the bay.  
Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet  
Successive round the jutting land, are sails. 535  
Th' Athenian pendant hastens to salute  
Leonidas. O Æschylus, my friend,

First

Book VI. L E O N I D A S.

227

First in the train of Phœbus, and of Mars,  
Be thou on board ! Swift-bounding o'er the waves,  
Come and be witness to heroic deeds ! 540  
Brace thy strong harp with loftier-sounding chords  
To celebrate this battle ! Fall, who may ;  
But if they fall with honor, let their names  
Round festive goblets in thy numbers ring,  
And joy, not grief, accompany the song. 545

CONVERSING thus, their courage they beguil'd,  
Which else impatient of inactive hours  
At long-suspended glory had repin'd.

E N D of the SIXTH BOOK.

## E R R A T A.

Page 33,	Line 509,	for <i>attic</i> read Attic.
46,	142,	after <i>note</i> put a full stop.
83,	55,	for <i>yerr</i> read your.
204,	167,	(in a few books) for <i>beauteous</i> read bounteous.











